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THE MAN OF THE RENAISSANCE INTERPRETED THROUGH THE LIFE AND PLAYS OF CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE

by

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The Man of the Renaissance Interpreted through the Life and Plays of Christopher Marlowe

Outline

Page

I Introduction: Statement of problem and methods to be used in its solution

II The Man of the Renaissance Interpreted through the Life and Plays of Christopher Marlowe

A. Christopher Marlowe, man of the Renaissance 1

1. Preliminary outline of life 2

2. Background of the poet's humanism laid at Cambridge University 5

3. A secret government mission 11

4. The Bradley duel 16

5. A dispute with two Holywell Street constables 21

6. Marlowe and the School of Night 24

7. The Deptford incident 35

B. The quality of humanism in Marlowe's play men 42

1. General statement of the nature of Renaissance humanism and its expression in Marlowe's male characters 42

2. Mythological lore acquired by Marlowe at The King's School is reflected in certain learned references of his male characters 44

Page

3. The typical Marlowe character's familiarity with ancient authors 47

4. Contemporary interest in astronomy reflected in the idiom of the male characters in *Tamburlaine* 50

5. Doctor John Faustus, humanist *par excellence* 53

a. His rejection of his vast learning as inadequate 54

b. The covenant with Mephistopheles by virtue of which Faustus hopes to put himself in possession of all the obscure arts of necromancy and all the remotest facts of this and other worlds 57

c. Faustus's end is that of the typical humanist 63

d. Conclusion: The tragedy of his life an implicit counsel to the wise scholar to keep his appetite for knowledge within sublunary bounds 64

C. The desire for unrestricted worldly achievement revealed in the activities and interests of the male characters in *Tamburlaine* 65

1. Identification of the quality with certain prevailing interests of Marlowe's era 65

2. The efforts of Renaissance adventurers to harness the hemispheres articulated in Tamburlaine's abnormal desire for conquest and that of the play's other male characters 67

3. That desire reflected in the play's geographic tour de force 79

4. Conclusion: The worldliness of Tamburlaine's standards perhaps more typical of the whole spirit of Marlowe's era than the quality to be discussed in the chapter immediately following 84

D. The desire to challenge the supernatural 87

1. Identification of this quality with certain prevailing interests of Marlowe's era 87

2. The spiritual diffidence of Sigismond in Tamburlaine and of Edward II an anomolous quality in Marlowe's men 90

3. Mortimer junior of Edward II closer to dominant Marlovian mood of spiritual insolence 91

4. Tamburlaine as the spiritual progenitor of Faustus 92

5. Faustus Marlowe's supreme expression of cosmic impudence 96

Page

6. Conclusion: The final annihilation of Tamburlaine and Faustus no negation of the Renaissance man's general disposition to question traditional authority 105

E. The quality of Machiavellism in Marlowe's male characters 107

1. Contemporary interest in Machiavellism 107

2. Marlowe's corruption of Machiavelli's original doctrines stimulated by Gentillet's Anti-Machiavel 107

3. The first imperfect expression of Marlowe's Machiavellism to be found in the male characters of Tamburlaine 113

4. The more advanced Machiavellism of certain characters in Edward II 116

5. The Dukes of Guise and Anjou as typical Machiavels 123

6. Barabas of Malta the supreme embodiment of Marlowe's philosophy of villainy 129

F. The quality of courtliness 143

1. The nature of Renaissance courtliness: Its derivation from Castiglione 143

2. Traces of its influence in Marlowe's men 145

a. The importance of birth 146

b. Humanism in the ideal courtier 147

c. The sartorial arts 148

d. The philosophy of friendship 152

3. Evidence in the male characters of Edward II that Marlowe has revised Castiglione's conception of the chief end of the courtier to something more nearly resembling Machiavellian doctrine 153

a. Only four of Marlowe's noblemen have retained Castiglione's ideal of what constitutes true service to a prince 154

b. The courtiers, like Baldock and Spencer, are bent on flattery and corruption 156

4. Conclusion: Marlowe's departure from Castiglione typical both of his own preoccupations and those of certain other men of the times 162

G. Aestheticism in Marlowe's play men 164

1. The nature of Renaissance aestheticism and its expression in Marlowe's plays 164

2. Of all his plays The Jew of Malta, Dido and The Massacre at Paris represent a rather low point in Marlowe's development of this quality 167

3. Aestheticism in Edward II 169

4. The quality of aestheticism in Faustus counterbalances his dominant passion for knowledge 170

5. A superb expression of Renaissance aestheticism is to be found in the perceptions and philosophy of the characters in Tamburlaine, particularly in those of the hero himself 172

Page

III Conclusion: The man of the Renaissance in miniature derived from the findings of previous chapters 183

PREFACE

The purpose of this paper will be to show why Christopher Marlowe - Cambridge scholar, government agent, swordsman, sceptic, elusive man-about-London, and short-lived prodigy of the Elizabethan theatrical scene - may be said to have given a pretty well-rounded illustration of the man of the Renaissance. Evidence for this view will be derived from Marlowe's own brief and spectacular career and the careers of certain male characters in his plays. It is hoped that, as my portrait of the Marlovian man of the Renaissance grows, he will appear not merely typical of his age but also of the varied, passionate, and somewhat immature intelligence that formed him from a half-conscious synthesis of its own compelling visions and delights and some of the chief preoccupations of the Elizabethan era.

So little is known of Marlowe's life and that little is so episodic and tentative that every new biographical commentator should begin by admitting with chagrin that many of the seeming conclusions that have been reached about him are only hypotheses bewitchingly adjusted to an authoritative pitch. He should, provided he has no brand-new data to offer, pledge himself - as do I - to avoid as fastidiously as possible the more serious critical and biographical pitfalls and confine himself generally to these fundamental propositions about

the dramatist's activities that have the approval of all conscientious students of Marlowe and the aspect, at least, of authenticity. Even then he must admit the disturbing possibility of another explosion in the archives - like those touched off by the valuable research of Messrs. Hotson and Eccles - in which case he may find many of his "facts" suddenly dated or the whole substructure of his argument blown apart. With these considerations in mind I can proceed with a wholesome humility to an explanation of my method.

The present concept of the Renaissance man will be derived through discussion, individually, of certain qualities strikingly evident in Marlowe's own character and the characters of leading personages in his plays. In the latter case the qualities mentioned will be found generally to exist in the protagonists, in Tamburlaine, Faustus, and Barabas, for example. But this is not true in every case: the quality of Machiavellism, for instance - or rather Gentillet's and Marlowe's distortion of it - should seem hardly less real in the secondary persons of Edward II's barons and favorites than in such considered monsters of sadism and treachery as Barabas in The Jew of Malta.

My first chapter, then, will be devoted to a consideration of elements in the character of the dramatist himself which seem specifically of the Renaissance. The following six chapters will be concerned principally with evidence from the plays. The second will discuss as basic to the point of view

in subsequent chapters the various manifestations of humanism among the male characters of Marlowe's plays. The third chapter will be entitled "The Desire for Unrestricted Worldly Achievement." The fourth, which offers a sort of spiritual counterbalance to the third and yet records in part another expression of the same impulse, will be called "The Desire to Challenge the Supernatural". The fifth chapter defines Machiavellism and Marlowe's misinterpretation of it and traces it through the various plays; and the sicth, which, owing to a peculiar twist in Marlowe's insight, is not unrelated to the fifth, is an analysis of the quality of courtliness inherited by Marlowe's men in part from Castiglione. The seventh will be an interpretation of the quality of aestheticism, or perhaps, more properly, sensuousness, as it appears in Marlowe's masculine characters. In the eighth and final chapter I shall attempt to draw the necessarily scattered attributes of my Renaissance man into a portrait, reasonably cogent, dynamic, and organized. That portrait will perhaps faintly resemble such typical men of their age as Ralegh, Jonson, Watson and Machiavelli and yet be given a unique meaning and animation by virtue of a special pigment present in it that could only be the formula of a brilliant and violent young apprentice to life, named Christopher Marlowe.

Chapter I

Marlowe, Man of the Renaissance

In order to find another man quite as well adjusted to the temper of his age as Sir Walter Ralegh one need look no further than that fabulous courtier's own circle. Of the mysterious and, in contemporary opinion, rather sinister "School of Night" that met informally at Sir Walter's to discuss religious, philosophical, and scientific questions was young Christopher Marlowe, boy-man with the touchy sword and the most thrilling dramatic and poetic talent of the day. Sword-play and playwrighting were only two of his talents. He was exceptionally versatile even in that brilliant noon of Elizabeth's reign, and versatility is probably the blanket characteristic that can be most safely ascribed to the man of the Renaissance. Marlowe was, as John Bakeless has said, "A man of the Renaissance, in love with life and equally in love with the world in which he lived it. He loved beauty. He also loved learning.... he was a ruffling bravo before whom the police quailed, skilled with the sword and dagger and entirely willing to use them."[1]

Shadowy and tentative as some of it is, the little that we now know of Marlowe seems disproportionately worthwhile. Not only is it cleared of some of the traditional black spots, misrepresentations, and half-truths that have attached themselves to earlier accounts of his life; it adds up to

1. John Bakeless, Christopher Marlowe, (N.Y.: 1937), p. 3.

another brilliant, though unfinished, portrait for our gallery of Renaissance men. Only in the last two decades have jealous Elizabethan archives yielded up a few of the crucial secrets of Marlowe's life. It is fortunate that of these and other tantalizing fragments of a sparkling and ill-omened career the ones that will be my principal concern in this chapter are the most satisfactory. It is even possible to say the facts that make Marlowe in my conception a perfect type of the man of the Renaissance are the fullest and most vivid facts of his life. In order, however, that they may have the advantage of being seen in proper perspective, it will be profitable to offer a brief introductory outline of Marlowe's life.

In the year 1564, just about two months earlier than his even more memorable successor, the Stratford wonder, "Marlowe's heyre", Christopher Marlowe was born in Canterbury, the son of a freeman shoemaker, John Marlowe, and his wife, Katherine Arthur. Four other children of that marriage survived infancy; they were all girls - Margaret, Joan, Ann, and Dorothy. When barely under the age limit of fifteen years, the Canterbury shoemaker's exceptional son won a scholarship to the King's School, where he studied until Michaelmas term of 1580. Being at that time ready for a University, he was so fortunate - and so deserving apparently - as to draw one of the Archbishop Parker Scholarships to Corpus Christi College., Cambridge. Parker himself had once been a Master of Corpus and had happily endowed it with a collection of books that were to have a tremendous influence in molding Kit Marlowe, humanist and man of

transparent literary allusions. To Cambridge then went Marlowe a little before Christmas of 1580. In 1584 he received his B.A.; the M.A. was awarded him three years later.

It will be remembered that the English Universities of that day were principally charged with the duty of training young men for the clergy. Yet in 1587 Marlowe left Cambridge not only with no marked clerical yearnings but also - if we interpret the attitude of the university authorities correctly - confirmed in a character not exactly equivalent to the ideal English divine's.

In fact, Christopher Marlowe was thought by his senior overseers at Cambridge University to be quite a horrid and considerable blot in the virgin annals of his college. Not only was he being vaguely impugned as "unorthodox" in his religious views, he had also consistently flaunted a term of his scholarship which said that "none of the ... schollers ... shall be absent out of the ... colledge for more than one moneth in any one yere except he be sent either upon the colledge business or thereto compelled through some notable sickness....."[1] It is writ large in the attitude assumed by the university authorities previous to Marlowe's receiving his master's degree that that young man had neither of these two legitimate excuses to offer for his conduct. Yet both as an undergraduate and as a graduate he had enjoyed a staggering number of absences from the University. Small wonder, then, that on the

1. John Bakeless, Op. Cit., p. 47.

basis of not one but two departures from the Cambridge norm he was in 1587 refused his master's degree.

Yet we know that in that same year he left Cambridge for good, wearing that same coveted M. A. in his cap. What sudden softening of their intent had led the austere Cambridge officials to reverse their decision and award the degree to the scapegrace Christopher Marlowe? There was no softening of intent, only a letter sent to the Cambridge mighty by Her Majesty's Privy Council. That letter contained urbane instructions for Marlowe's critics to consider him a little holier than he seemed and to lose no time in conferring upon him his master's degree. The story behind that letter is matter for a future section of this paper. All that can be seasonably offered at this point is the dark hint that Christopher Marlowe, obscure child of an obscure artisan of Canterbury, had won for himself a mighty ally even before he had discarded his callow academic robes for the motley of escapades and literary triumphs that distinguished his brief London period.

From Cambridge, then, Marlowe went directly to London, a scene which was perhaps not altogether unfamiliar to him. There, with the characteristic impetuosity of most men of his age, he became attached to the Lord Admiral's Company, for which he composed most of his plays. The Newgate Calendar of 1589 reveals him as living in "Norton fowlgate", a liberty outside the legal jurisdiction of London, a somewhat wild and disreputable region frequented by players and playhouse authors

and others of uncertain conscience. Later Marlowe may have moved to Holywell Street, another part of Shoreditch, to be nearer "The Curtain" and "The Theatre", where many of his plays were performed.

The years between 1587 and 1593 were spent in engrossing theatrical activities and several grim but picturesque clashes with the law. On May 30, 1593, Christopher Marlowe met his death in a tavern at Deptford. According to a coroner's findings, an argument over the payment of the reckoning, hotly pursued in the presence of two witnesses by Marlowe and one Ingram Frizer, ended in some dagger play that proved fatal to Marlowe.

Such is the slender outline of Marlowe's life. It remains now to fill in that outline with those richer occupations and incidents which will be landmarks in my pursuit of the Marlovian man of the Renaissance.

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In this discussion there can be no danger of overestimating the profound effect on Marlowe's intellectual development of the seven years spent at Cambridge. Perhaps he did not take those years as seriously as a less brilliant scholar might have done, but they have left their stamp upon him; they witnessed his progress from the neophyte scholar of Canterbury, crammed with the mythological lore of his King's School days, to Christopher Marlowe, gentleman and full-fledged humanist. For Marlowe shared with many another man of his time

an unbounded reverence for classical learning - for bookish lore of every sort; he steeped every play that he wrote in the luxuriance of his far-flung allusions. As Bakeless has commented, he had "an inquiring mind, sensitive, alert, and curious ... in very large measure the mind of a scholar. This aspect of Marlowe's mind appears in the images of his plays".[1]

For his Christopher Marlowe Bakeless has done some excellent research on the sources of Marlowe. His task must have been an absorbing and not too difficult one. Marlowe often leads one straight to his sources; their identity glows in his pages. Bakeless must also have been greatly helped by the knowledge that, in Marlowe's day at Cambridge, library facilities were limited to a degree inconceivable to us, who are often overcome by the forbidding vastness of our great city and university libraries. It is at Cambridge that Marlowe did a good part of his reading.

Bakeless has pointed out that the imagery of Marlowe's plays is almost entirely mythological, astronomical, or classical in character. It has been observed that Marlowe had acquired an impressive mythological background at the King's School - an enduring and vigorous background if we can judge by the metaphor of the plays. His interest in astronomy can perhaps be attributed equally to Gemma Frisius, whose book on astronomy seems to have been part of Archbishop Parker's

1. John Bakeless, Op. Cit., p. 9.

collection in Marlowe's Corpus days, and to Thomas Harriot, Marlowe's friend and fellow-member of Ralegh's circle. The poet's classical investigations are less obvious, more extensive, and will be studied somewhat more specifically play by play.

Like most contemporary writers Marlowe seemed to think it hardly respectable to undertake the composition of a play or any other literary piece without first arming his invention with any number of sources. Shakespeare, for example, was one to see eye to eye with his hot-headed predecessor on this question. Tamburlaine is the play for which Marlowe appears to have drawn most heavily on his reading. The principal sources of the play, the historians Perondinus and Pedro Mexia, are already well recognized, so also is Marlowe's indebtedness to Ariosto and Spenser, particularly the Spenser of the Faerie Queene. Besides these many other influences are detectable. There is, for example, Paul Ive's Practice of Fortification, which Marlowe could only have seen in manuscript and which gives to many a warlike scene in Tamburlaine its bristling technical reality. Ethel Seaton has carefully catalogued Marlowe's debt to the Theatrum Orbis Terrarum of the Dutch cartographer, Ortelius, a work also of Archbishop Parker's collection and acessible to Marlowe. It is interesting to observe how literally Marlowe took Ortelius - eccentricities and all - and made him the geographical framework of Tamburlaine's march of conquest. The kings of "Fess, Moroco, and Argier", whom, like

everyone else he encountered, Tamburlaine swept into his own orbit, can thank Ortelius for the quaint orthographical form in which they are introduced. Other works in the Corpus library during Marlowe's Cambridge days which appear to have influenced parts of Tamburlaine are those of Paulus Jovius, Bishop of Nocera and Pope Pius II, Baptista Ignatius's De Origine Turcarum Libellus and Philip Lonicer's Chronicorum Turcicorum Libri. Pius's Asiae Europaeque Elegantissima Descriptio is Marlowe's authority for the episode in which the virgins of Damascus come to plead with Tamburlaine for the life of their city; it is also the source of the "Scourge-of-God" imputation, in which Marlowe's hero takes such fierce delight. Even in the most obscure details of his earliest dramatic success Marlowe has taken manifold hints from sources. Baptista Fulgotius - another author appearing on Cambridge bookshelves in Marlowe's time - and Philip Lonicer are the two men who back Marlowe up when he gives as five hundred the number of troops with which Tamburlaine confronted the Persian King.

Marlowe was no pedant, however. He managed his learning with an ease characteristic of most of his educated contemporaries, of whom Raleigh, Sidney, and Marlowe's own group, the "University Wits", are not the least exemplary. He read and found the germs of inspiration in chapbooks and contemporary pamphlets as well as among the older and more reputable authors. That fact is indicated by the curious melange

of references underlying his Faustus. Some of these references are popular and evanescent in nature and have survived only by virtue of the dignity with which Marlowe's genius has invested them; some may take their place among the most substantial of the classics. Marlowe may have become familiar with the Faustus story during his Cambridge days. It is certain, at any rate, that his play was based upon a current chapbook called The Historie of the Damnable Life and Deserved Death of Doctor John Faustus, itself a rather free translation of the German Faust-buch. But one may also observe in Faustus brief, sometimes half-conscious, evocations of a less democratic research. Contrast for example, the mournful "cut-is-the-branch" paggage, l. 1478 ff., which is Marlowe's slightly juggled edition of an excerpt from Thomas Churchyard's Shore's Wife with the anguished "O lente, lente currite noctis equi!", l 1428, in which Faustus tragically alters the voluptuous mood of Ovid's original invocation. Or set the "thousand-ships", soliloquy, l. 1328 ff., that unforgettable synthesis of fragments from the Historie, Lucian, the Aeneid, and Iphigenia in Tauris, opposite Faustus's cry of "Sweet Analutikes tis thou hast rauisht me," l. 34, an effortless allusion to Marlowe's familiarity with Aristotle.

The same avid mind of the scholar and the same acute recollection of all types of literary experience are detectable in The Jew of Malta. The Portuguese Jew, Joao Mique, or "Joseph Nassi", who is supposed partly to have inspired Marlowe's portrait of Barabas, is described by Philip Lonicer, whose name I mentioned previously in connection with the sources

of Tamburlaine, and in the Cosmographic Universelle, source of another Tamburlaine episode. Still more interesting is the trail of sources that began with The Navigations of Nicholas Nicolay, by Marlowe's friend Thomas Walsingham the younger. In his account of the siege of Tripoli Walsingham tells how a traitor betrayed to the Turks the weakest spot in the castle's fortifications. The passage in The Jew of Malta in which Barabas makes a similar disclosure to the Turkish enemies of the Maltese is too close to Walsingham's account and Marlowe too close to Walsingham for the similarity to be counted coincidence. The Navigations seem to have led the bookish Marlowe to new discoveries. It calls attention to Nicholas de Villegagnon's Discours de la Guerre de Malte, which repeats the incident of Tripoli's fall and mentions one "Seigneur Ferneze". It will be remembered that Marlowe calls his governor of Malta, "Ferneze".

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The sources of Marlowe's other plays are less scattered, but they continue to betray a mind that, in its literary associations at least, had taken all knowledge to be its province. For the story of Edward II Marlowe is indebted to the Holinshed Chronicle of Shakespeare fame, a source somewhat less quaint or distinguished than those underlying Tamburlaine and Faustus but nevertheless indicative of the easy scope of Marlowe's reading.

In Dido, which plods along side by side with the first part of the Aeneid, and in Hero and Leander, which takes

its story from a late Greek poem by a man somewhat tentatively identified as Musaeus, he is once again happy in classical company. As for his delight in Ovid, that should be evident even to the most casual student of his scholarship. Besides the echoes of Ovid to be found in his plays, a translation of the three books of the Amores, done by Marlowe very early in his career, is the dramatist's tribute to this the most admired of his classical sources. Completing my identification of Marlowe humanist, man of wide literary tastes, is an obscure but characteristic translation of the first book of Lucan's Pharsalia.

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I have already hinted that Marlowe's Cambridge days were not merely the period of undivided scholarship, or the period spent in acquiring flexible reading habits, that the foregoing section may have indicated. Had our poet spent all these seven years assiduously burning the student's tallow, I should have somewhat less cause to claim for him that Elizabethan capacity for brilliantly diversified interests and occupations that I profess to detect everywhere in his life story and in his plays.

In the preliminary section of this chapter I mentioned how Marlowe had violated the terms of his scholarship by supernumerary absences from the college. I further revealed how the university authorities, in consideration of this cheerful disregard of a fixed agreement and their own doubts of the poet's

loyalty to the Church of England, had refused in 1587 to grant Marlowe the master's degree. A letter from the Privy Council, which at the time I referred to significantly as indicating extraordinary government interest in Marlowe's welfaire, was the cause of these worthies' suddenly changing their minds. That letter is a rather illuminating document and deserves to be reproduced here.

"Whereas it was reported that Christopher Morley (one of the numerous variants of "Marlowe") was determined to have gone beyond the seas to Reames (Rheims) and there to remain, their Lordships thought good to certify that he had no such intent, but that in all his accions he had behaued himselfe orderlie and discreetelie wherebie he had done her Majesty good service, and deserued to be rewarded for his faithfull dealinge. Their Lordships request was that the rumor thereof should be allaied, by all possible meanes, and that he should be furthered in the degree he was to take this next Commencement: Because it was not her Majestes pleasure that any one employed as he had been in matters touching the benefitt of his countrie should be defamed by those who are ignorant in th' affaires he went about."[1]

It hardly needs to be stated that here is an outright acknowledgment of a former very profitable alliance between Her Majesty's government and the humble-seeming Christopher

1. John Bakeless, Op. Cit., p. 80.

Marlowe. But the exact nature of that alliance is unfortunately never explained. The inscrutability of the Council has been meat and drink to Marlowe scholars. Out of the stately reticence of this body, Hotson, Bakeless, Boas, and others have recreated a very plausible and fascinating circumstance. To understand that circumstance properly we must go back to the Bursar's accounts of Corpus Christi College for the late winter, spring and early summer of 1587. We should, perhaps, go back even further than that.

Even from 1583 Marlowe had been enjoying occasional absences from his studies at Corpus, but in the first half of the year 1587 the habit seems really to have grown to license. From February until July of that year Christopher Marlowe was not to be found anywhere at the university. When and if he did return sometime in July, it was, as Dr. Moore Smith pointed out, only to assume the respectability of being in residence at the time of his expected commencement. What was Marlowe doing in all those last months of his absence? All evidence points to the probability of his being a government agent in the employ of Sir Francis Walsingham, the head of Elizabeth's secret service and the scourge of Elizabethan Catholics.

We know that Thomas Walsingham, cousin to the notable Sir Francis, was Marlowe's patron and this his son - also a Thomas - was the poet's friend. These two and Marlowe may have become acquainted during one of the poet's undergraduate furloughs from the university. Through them a gifted and willful young student could have met and impressed the head of

Elizabeth's secret service. After all Marlowe was intellectually mature enough possibly to have begun his Tamburlaine while he was still at the university, and his subsequent London career should indicate that Sir Francis knew what he was doing when and if he suspected Marlowe of possessing as much courage and daring as he early proved to have wit. Bakeless tells us that Elizabethan literary men frequently served in the capacity of government agents, and Marlowe was hardly one to resist conforming to an agreeably dangerous fashion of the age, especially one that, pursued with success, would flatter so gloriously his own climbing ego.

The nature of those days as well as his own character seems to give a special air of authenticity to the prevailing belief that Marlowe was working for Walsingham during his last year at Cambridge. Those were feverish times. Catholic plots were afoot, calculated to undermine Elizabeth's government and the precarious Protestantism of her reign. The Babington conspiracy had only recently been crushed by Walsingham himself with the somewhat equivocal assistance of Robert Poley, one of Marlowe's companions in the famous Deptford incident of some years later. The Armada was being prepared for the invasion of England, and Spanish forces were collecting in the Low Countries.

The opening words of the letter from the Privy Council suggest other, related conclusions. Rheims was at that time the hotbed of English Catholic seminarists, who, when they

returned to England, usually became involved in that vast web of complotters against Elizabeth's sovereignty. Marlowe may actually have gone to Rheims with instructions to counterspy on these Jesuit seminarists, or else the report of his presence in that part of France may only have been a rumor, which grew out of his mysterious absence from the university and which Her Majesty's ministers seriously wished to lay.

At all events Mr. Secretary Walsingham could hardly have found a fitter agent of the Queen's business than Christopher Marlowe. He was at the age when young men who had been wavering for some time between the new faith and the older Catholicism could suddenly make up their minds in favor of the latter and bolt across the Channel to Rheims and Jesuitical studies. Moreover heinous things were being laid to Marlowe's account at the university, things likely to bolster the impression we get from contemporary account of the School of Night of a somewhat bold, impatient, and free-thinking young scamp. He was, I have said, believed to be unorthodox in his religious views. The Puritans at the University hated him thoroughly. And he is known - whether seriously or not it is hard to tell, since one is speaking of perverse and satiric young Christopher Marlowe - to have advocated with enthusiasm various Papist ceremonies and doctrines.

In fact the whole episode of Marlowe's secret mission for the government and the circumstances that made it seem advisable offer a unique illustration of the Elizabethan paradox. Renaissance individualist that he was in the matter

of his religious views, he was yet sufficiently adjusted to his time in another respect to want to be something more than an aloof spectator in the drama of those exciting pre-Armada days.

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Stirring as are the implications of the letter from the Privy Council, the most flamboyant of Christopher Marlowe's adventures were to be reserved for his London days. I have mentioned the fact that, after leaving Cambridge, he lost little time in seeling that one City of England where a lad who had recently smarted under the structures of university propriety could find suitable range for his youthful hopes and enthusiasms. I have mentioned also the probability that the poet's earliest London residence was in Norton Folgate.

It is between two and three o'clock in the afternoon of September 18, 1589, that we next meet Christopher Marlowe, and at that time he is, as we might have expected, head over heels in an adventure. He has just crossed swords with one William Bradley, son of William Bradley, marbler and host of "The Bishop" at "Grais In Lanes Ende,"[1] Holborne. The scene of the affray is Hog's lane, a small street - more properly an alley - running from Marlowe's residence in Norton Folgate to Finsbury Fields near "The Theatre" and "The Curtain," where most of his plays will be performed. Cold steel is now being

1. Mark Eccles, Christopher Marlowe in London, (Cambridge: 1934), p. 54.

knit fast and noisily, the dispute becomes so close, in fact, that "upon the clamor of the people"[1] Thomas Watson, the poet and scholar, rushes in Mercutio-style to part the combatants. Bradley welcomes him with the cry: "Art thou now come? Then I will have a bout with thee."[2] From that moment on the quarrel is one of sword and dagger between Watson and Bradley, and Marlowe discreetly withdraws to the sidelines. Not long after the fight begins to go hard with Watson, who, in order to avoid being trapped in a ditch and slain by his antagonist, himself is forced to give the mortal blow.

Such in substance was the nature of the altercation as interpreted by the coroner's jury, come together on September 19 to determine the cause of Bradley's death, Ion Chalkhill presiding. The sequel to the drama in Hog's Lane is hardly less engrossing than the drama itself.

Stephen Wyld, constable of the precinct in which the fight took place, soon appeared and marched the two surviving culprits between Owen Hopton, the nearest justice. From Hopton's presence they were sent to Newgate to await with whatever philosophy they could muster the findings of the coroner's jury. It was in the power of these worthy men to return a verdict of manslaughter or murder against Watson. In the event of either decision the repercussions for Marlowe would be embarrassing and inconvenient, thought not nearly as serious as

1. Mark Eccles, Op. Cit.,p. 30.
2. Ibid, p. 10.

those his fellow prisoner would have to face.

That was a sympathetic jury, however. It decided that Watson had merely been acting in the interests of the Queen's peace and submitted the verdict that he had slain Bradley "se defendendo".[1] He must, however, remain in prison until the Queen decided to show clemency toward him. Marlowe, on the other hand, was admitted to bail on October 1 and freed in a bond of forty pounds on the presentation of two obscure sureties, Richard Kitchen of Clifford's Inn, lawyer, and Humphrey Rowland of East Smithfield, horner and church warden of St. Botolph's in Aldgate.

In accordance with the terms of his bond Marlowe pledged himself to appear at the next gaol delivery, which was to be held on December 3. At that time a group of austere justices with no earthly reason for favoring a scandalous playwright confirmed the findings of the coroner's jury, and Marlowe was free to depart and embroil himself in other scrapes, which he lost no time in doing.

Watson did not secure the Queen's pardon until February 12.

Theatrical in the approved Elizabethan manner as is this little incident of obscure conflict, death, and imprisonment during the autumn of 1589, the relationships and anterior circumstances deduced by Eccles and others who follow him from

1. Mark Eccles, Op. Cit, p. 12.

fragments of old records are just as typical of that age of quick tempers, challenges, and swashbuckling friendships. It now appears that Thomas Watson, whose zeal for the maintenance of the Queen's peace caused him to step between the ringing blades of the inn-keeper's son and the scapegrace, Marlowe, and who later and for thirteen days languished in Newgate prison in our hero's company, was in reality one of the poet-dramatist's closest friends. It also seems that even in those days of violent street quarrels Bradley was particularly given to the hard word and sudden stroke. Eccles and Bakeless both record evidence of a previous quarrel between Bradley and his brother Richard on the one hand and a belligerent jerkin-maker's apprentice on the other.[1] But, though that discovery provides an amusing insight into Bradley's character, it is only of secondary significance. Truly significant is the disclosure of a record of the Court of the Queen's Bench, perhaps made during the summer of 1589, just a few months previous to the fatal quarrel. According to that record Bradley petitioned a justice of the Bench to have Watson and two companions enter bond to keep the peace toward him, Bradley, the petitioner. When one more clue is recognized, namely the reputation of Finsbury Fields - so close to the Hog's Lane of the Bradley-Watson-Marlowe explosion - as a place of duels in Elizabeth's day, Eccles's modest reconstruction of the circumstances leading

1. Mark Eccles, Op. Cit. p. 54; John Bakeless Op. Cit., p. 56.

to the quarrel, though somewhat in defiance of the findings of the coroner's jury, seems thoroughly admissible.

Perhaps, as Eccles suggests, the fight was not casual at all but thoroughly premeditated. Bradley had petitioned the Queen's Bench for protection against Watson, and Watson, possibly irritated by Bradley's informing on him, had invited his enemy to have it out once and for all in Finsbury Fields. How Marlowe happened to intercept Bradley before the latter reached the duelling ground is a secret that possibly the incorrigible poet and the other two protagonists alone share. It is defensible, however, to suppose, as Eccles suggests, that for some reason or other Marlowe was fighting his friend's quarrel but that, when Watson rushed upon the scene, Bradley saw a more tempting sheath for his sword. "Art thou now come?" he cried. "Then I will have a bout with thee". Small wonder, says Eccles in summary, if Watson was suspected of malice aforethought by men like Wyld and Hopton, who might have heard of his previous feud with Bradley.

Whether or not we will ever be offered fuller light on these remote innuendos, one thing at least is certain. There are few incidents of his career that localize Marlowe more completely in his time than this brilliant and fatal engagement of Hog's Lane. It is like the fashionable young roisterer of previous government intrigue and his no-less-dashing ally to know the reputation that Finsbury Fields enjoyed among dramatists as well as archers and to want to make the most of it. Marlowe, was, in truth, child of an age of expert

swordsmen - dramatists. Ben jonson, for example, was able to kill his man and escape the penalty of hanging by reading the Latin "neck verse" and suffering a branding in the hand. But it was not just the unruly authors and actors of theatrical London who loved to ply sword and dagger in the public streets. "Elizabethans", says Bakeless, "were always fighting. The court parchments in Middlesex archives are full of yeomen, tradesmen, tailors, and shoemakers intent on mayhem or murder with rapier, short-sword, bill, knife, or dagger."[1] The Christopher Marlowe who became a gentleman through ambition and who in his plays was able to refract with zestful accuracy the many-faceted spirit of his age was not one to give social precedence in the matter of sheer, reckless, super-contemporary living to a tradesman, a yeoman, or a jerkin-maker's apprentice.

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Dwarfed perhaps by the more conspicuous events of Marlowe's life that I have been discussing is the engaging fragment of an episode that occurred on May 9, 1592. But it is all of a piece with that swashbuckling quality in Marlowe, revealed by the government assignment and the Bradley duel. Moreover it has a special value apart from the brief but spirited stroke of color it unquestionably leaves upon our portrait of Marlowe, Renaissance man.

Of all the imputations from which Marlowe has justly

1. John Bakeless, Op. Cit., p. 163.

and unjustly suffered one of the commonest is that he lacked humor. If one sets his faith in the plays as one possible - though rather tentative and indirect - criterion of what Marlowe felt and thought, there is indeed much evidence in favor of this libel. Now that the coarsely comic episodes in Doctor Faustus and The Jew of Malta are pretty generally conceded not to be Marlowe's, one is hard put to it to find cause for merriment anywhere in the plays. Barabas is funny but only because his villainy too often verges on the unconscious burlesque. In fact, it is hard to avoid the feeling that Marlowe was too engrossed in Machiavellism and all its more sinister aspects to see in it the satiric possibilities that Muriel Bradbrook, for one, believes he has seen.[1] And as for Tamburlaine - why the core of that work's ten acts of wearisome sameness is the conqueror's tireless capacity for taking himself seriously. One would expect a belly laugh from Tamburlaine almost as soon as from Malvolio.

How rare, then, is the oddly Falstaffian twinkle behind Marlowe's run-in with the Shoreditch constables! Of course our records on this incident are once again as brief and unsatisfactory and our conclusions as inconclusive as they have proved to be on other significant aspects of Marlowe's biography, but, for all that, it is still possible to say that here is a situation that Shakespeare might have imagined. If

1. Muriel Bradbrook, The School of Night,(Cambridge: 1936), p. 74.

ever the character of a young Elizabethan rogue was given with classic indirectness, if ever laughter was instinct in a situation yet judiciously stifled to preserve the immemorial dignity of the law, it was in that miserable, quaking testimony given by those Shoreditch limbs of the law.

On May 9, 1592, Allen Nicholls and Nicholas Helliot, respectively constable and sub-constable of Shoreditch, marched before Sir Owen Hopton, Lieutenant of the Tower, and begged that "Christopher Marle" be bound over to keep the peace toward all the Queen's subjects but especially towards themselves. These fearless servants of Elizabeth were from Holywell Street, to which Marlowe may have moved any time after the Bradley episode in order to be nearer the theatres. So importunate were they that the poet was directed to appear at the next general sessions, which were to be held in October. In the summer of that year Marlowe was probably still in London, waiting for the ban to be lifted from the theatres. Then the plague broke out. In October, when he was supposed to appear at the general sessions, Marlowe was probably in sanctuary at the Walsingham estate in Chislehurst, Kent, busily engaged about his Hero and Leander. At all events it appears that he did not show up in London in the fall of 1592 to give satisfaction to his ruffled friends, the Shoreditch constables.

Be that as it may, the little episode with all its blind spots and biographical inadequacies is significant as well as entertaining. It is further testimony of the prevailingly rash and even violent character of the master of the mighty line,

who nevertheless seems to have had sense of humor enough to stand off from his anger and enjoy the sight of himself playing bogey-man to those ludicrous keepers of the Queen's peace, Nicholls and Helliot of Holywell Street.

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Lest we begin to conclude that Marlowe spent the greater part of his six years in London either writing plays or brawling about the town, an incident of May 18, 1593 appears to open up a brand new storehouse of social and intellectual relationships. Emerging lustrous from those relationships are some of the best and bravest names of the age that make the Bradleys and Watsons of previous history seem cloudy by comparison. Curiously enough the adventury of May 18 once again involves Marlowe's old benefactors, The Privy Council.

On that date a messenger was sent by the Council to Scadbury, the Chislehurst estate of Marlowe's patron, Thomas Walsingham, with a warrant for the poet's arrest. The affair was apparently not of such a nature as to make imprisonment desirable, for, once again in London, Marlowe was free to come and go as he pleased, though presumably with the understanding that he would be on hand if ever the Council needed him.

Scholars have found two principal reasons for his arrest. In the first place he was reputedly one of a group of distinguished men, led by Sir Walter Ralegh, to whom Shakespeare has given the intriguing name of "The School of Night"[1] and who

1. Love's Labour's Lost, 4, 3, 214.

for some time had been causing scandalized comment among their more conservative contemporaries. Of the various distempers attributed to Ralegh's group one of the more specific was "atheism", a very serious offence in Elizabeth's time. In the second place certain posters libeling Flemish immigrants had been set up all over London, and the government had grown suspicious of literary men and of Marlowe and Thomas Kyd in particular. The former charge seems to have been more realistic if we are to accept the "confession" sent by Kyd to Sir John Puckering, Keeper of the Seal, not long after Marlowe's death.

Marlowe and Kyd, the letter of confession states, had been sharing the same room in 1591. In 1593 Kyd was arrested and his papers searched. Among them was found a pamphlet in which some forty years earlier, on the invitation of Archbishop Cranmer, a Unitarian had attempted to set forth and defend his heresy. Kyd affirmed that the pamphlet was not his, that it was only by some inexplicable confusion that it had come to be among his papers and not where it belonged - among the manuscripts of that villain, Christopher Marlowe. Furthermore he, Kyd, knew his former roommate to be sympathetic to the views expressed in the pamphlet.

When Kyd offered his explanation of how the incriminating document had come into his possession, Marlowe was dead of a dagger wound and Kyd himself a panic-stricken man. For these reasons we must take with some reservations

Kyd's violent defence of his own principles in the letter to Puckering. Perhaps he was guilty of "atheism" as charged, and a one-minded zeal for his own neck urged him to use the single accident of his questionable intimacy with Marlowe to identify the poet exclusively with a situation in which he may or may not have been involved. Or perhaps Kyd thought that Marlowe, being dead, would be better able than his friend to sustain the cool fury of the law. At all events Kyd was cunning enough to follow up his somewhat suspicious beginning more forcibly and to paint grey black by attributing to Marlowe crimes against established Anglican doctrine which other contemporary dogmatists or traducers had also been busy laying at the poet's door.

"ffirst", Kyd ran on recklessly, "it was his (Marlowe's) custom when j knewe him first & as I heare saie he contynewd it in table talk or otherwise to iest at the devine scriptures, gybe at praiers, & stryve in argument to frustrate & confute what hath byn spoke or wrytt by prophets and such holie men."[1]

If ever there was an intelligence capable of thinking issues through for itself, that intelligence was Christopher Marlowe's. The sometimes over-metaphysical Muriel Bradbrook has judged his mental calibre soundly when she says that he had "the most thoughtful and philosophic mind among Eliza -

1. John Bakeless, Op. Cit., p. 168.

bethan dramatists."[1] But for all that independence of judgment the spiritual, intellectual and artistic influence upon him of Ralegh's School of Night cannot be lightly estimated. Sentiments such as those Kyd claims to have heard from his lips may have been seriously or impishly uttered, but it is fairly certain that they reflected the character and concerns being generally attributed around 1593 to Ralegh and his circle.

The "School of Night", as Shakespeare calls it - or the "School of Atheism", to use the Jesuit Parson's epithet - dates from no earlier than 1585, a significant time, for then Marlowe was still at Cambridge and breezily taking those occasional furloughs from his academic duties. If during those absences he was sometimes in London seeing about his responsibilities as government agent, he may have made the acquaintance of Ralegh and his friends, and the unorthodoxy of the religious views attributed to him while still an undergraduate may have been no more influenced by Kett and Thomas Fineux than by the illustrious Ralegh and his friends.

There were some interesting names enrolled in that school: Thomas Harriot, mathematician and astronomer; Walter Warner, mathematician also; George Chapman, translator of Homer and that friend of Marlowe's who though enough of him to complete the unfinished Hero and Leander; Matthew Royden, Poet; Sir George Carey; and the Earls of Northumberland and

1. Muriel Bradbrook, Op. Cit., p. 103.

Derby. Socially and intellectually diverse as these men seemed, they were united by that common, leveling Renaissance quality-curiosity. But it was Ralegh who was the group's presiding genius, one of its best and most versatile minds, and one of its most brilliant personalities.

Scholars have found numerous parallels between Ralegh and Marlowe - all in qualities that knit them unmistakeably to their time. Ralegh was, however, even more resourceful than Marlowe. But he was shallower in one respect at least - as a poet. Even then his activities and interests were remarkable for their scope. He was young and handsome, bold and proud, now tender and now, like Marlowe himself, "of cruel heart",[1] sometimes the bane of his enemies, sometimes the idol of his sailors. Like Marlowe he had a salty tongue and a "malicious liveliness of temper".[2] In his early youth he could brawl with all the fierce eagerness of a Marlowe, but again, like Marlowe, he longed "to explore the countries of the mind without reserve".[3] He was a linguist, a student, a sceptic in religion, a sailor, a soldier, a poet, an explorer, a philosopher, and an historian. He was a member of Archbishop Parker's Society of Antiquaries, a humanitarian and a humanist of a sort that not only that learned clergyman but also Bacon would have applauded, for he was founder of several scholarly societies.

1. John Bakeless, Op. Cit., p. 170.
2. Muriel Bradbrook, Op. Cit., p. 15.
3. Ibid, p. 103.

No less intriguing than the personalities of these men of the School of Night were some of the heresies and blasphemies attributed to them. Today many of these charges maybe quickly "placed" merely by a reference to the privacy with which the group operated. Few people could know their comings and goings, and this fact, combined with the sly, perhaps misleading, certainly unsatisfactory hints given out by Marlowe and other members when in patently stiff-backed company, was enough to keep the conservative and curious of the period gnashing their teeth and yearning to know more.

For all those times could be times of unchecked incursion into the religiously and intellectually taboo, there were the form at least of dogmatism and restraint still abroad. The age could be sober, as witness the emphasis of all Renaissance criticism upon the central need of a didactic purpose in art. There was in fact, as Miss Bradbrook has sensed, "an actual danger" in that age in having "too aspiring a mind",[1] though she means her statement to carry primarily religious implications. Perhaps this fact will explain the horrified scandal-mongering spirit of most contemporary criticism of Ralegh's school.

Richard Baines, the informer, not only accuses Marlowe of that much abused and never too closely defined abuse, "atheism"; he also gives him Papist sympathies, in

1. Muriel Bradbrook, Op. Cit., p. 53.

these times certainly as serious an offense as "atheism". Witness the result of the Babington conspiracy. The Devonshire clergy, being of Ralegh's own district, probably thought they had a better idea than anyone else of what was going on in that outlandish courtier's group - and a superior spiritual status from which to judge it. Marlowe and his friends of the school were supposed by these worthies "to have brought the God-head[1] in question and the whole course of Scriptures." Parsons, the Jesuit, speaks of "Sir Walter Rawley's School of Atheisme .... and the Conjuror that is M(aster) thereof, and of the diligence used to get young gentlemen of this school wherein both Moyses and our Saviour, the olde and the newe Testamentes are jested at, and the scollers taught, among other things to spell God backward".[2]

Such opinions represent a fair cross-section of current interpretations of the school's activities. The spirit of the comments is everywhere the same, being apparently compounded of back-yard insight, crude sensationalism, and a spicing of truth. When all the evidence is weighed, it seems likely that the only conclusion to be drawn from the various charges made against Ralegh and his curious friends is that the group questioned the authority of Scripture in a casual sort of way and that they had an interest in the occult. The latter of these two preoccupations is, as Miss

1. Ibid, p. 13.
2. Ibid, p. 12.

Bradbrook has pointed out, not as strange as it appears in that searching age. Occultism was closely associated with philosophy and science and hardly less reputable than astrology. The coexistence of real and pseudo-science, like the coexistence of the Devonshire clergy's straitlaced religious orthodoxy and the mild iconoclasm of Ralegh's group, can be diagnosed simply as "lack of synthesis", from which the whole age suffered. The times had not yet had a chance to assemble, weed, and organize the vast and miscellaneous information willed them by a preceding generation; "the best of scholars were at sea".[1]

But, aside from these rather casual occupations, what were the positive interests of the school that we can hit upon with any certainty? In the catalogue of those interests diversity is once again evident. The group argued philosophy and theology; they studied astronomy, geography, and chemistry. Perhaps discussion turned occasionally to politics and statecraft. Marlowe knew Machiavelli and had been employed as a government agent. Northumberland and Derby, but Carey and Ralegh especially, must have developed in those uncertain times an uncanny presentiment of each new gust of political favor or disfavor, must have been on easy terms of familiarity with the courtier's science of "policy", for which Machiavelli was indirectly responsible and which

1. Muriel Bradbrook, Op. Cit., p. 71.

Spencer in Edward II, for example, recommends to the scholar, Baldock.[1] The group seems also to have been concerned about deriving a philosophic theology compounded of the sounder-seeming Christian beliefs and Stoicism - that popular Renaissance commodity - particularly as it is reflected in the doctrines of Heraclitus of Ephesus, who underlies some of the poetic symbolism of Marlowe, Chapman, and Ralegh. Miss Bradbrook has noted the group's versatility, its "capacity for digesting the most different form of experience"[2] of which the foregoing outline of their interests should be earnest enough.

And what of Marlowe's special debt to the school, particularly in the way of a religious outlook? We have observed that back in his college days he had been suspected of veering away from conventional Anglicanism. But in those days, even as in these of 1593, his sin was probably no more than that of knowing too much to accept traditional dogma on sight. Kyd, Baines, and his other calumniators were never able to produce a more specific evidence of his "atheism" - or, as we would more properly call it now, "Socinianism" - than pamphlets of dubious ownership and "the flash and smoke of his wit."[3] Marlowe - like all enlightened men of his age - was the foe of superstition, and his calcinating mind had matched Harriot's in blasting its way through the implausibilities and inaccuracies he thought he saw in Scripture. But

1. C. F. Tucker Brooke, Ed., "Edward II", The Works of Christopher Marlowe, (Oxford: 1925), II.751-763.
2. Muriel Bradbrook, Op. Cit. p. 43.
3. Ibid, p. 17.

the principal trouble with the man seems to have been this: he had the flexible man's hatred of the "stuffed shirt". Both Kyd and Baines seem to have had no sense of humor. In his travels Marlowe probably met many men of that sort, men who in addition cherished staunchly and irrationally the Haviland-china idols of a superstitious faith. Against these Marlowe would have loved to sharpen his mocking and elusive dialectic, while refusing to compliment them by a sustained and biting argument. Ralegh had the same talent for toying with men's seriousness. Few there were who could meet without slogans or equivocations such searching questions of his as that on the nature of the soul.[1] Ralegh recognized this, and laughingly sidestepped the banal deadlocks of argument.

Marlowe's plays are another possible memorial of the effect upon him of Ralegh's School of Night. Spence, however, has inserted a timely warning into the stream of Marlowe commentary concerning the unreliability of the poet's plays as sources of biography.[2] With his caution in mind I shall make no attempt to read a specific School of Night "atheism" into any of Marlowe's characters, and hope fervently that that character is in truth a mouthpiece of Marlowe's. Instead I shall only attempt to indicate a few of the ways in which Marlowe actually incorporated into his plays

1. Muriel Bradbrook, Op. Cit., p. 20.
2. Leslie Spence, "Tamburlaine and Marlowe", Modern Language Association of America, Publications, Vol. 42, (Wisconsin: 1929), pp. 608-609.

hints of engrossing experiences which the meetings at Ralegh's were providing.

It is probable, for instance, that the yarns of the swashbuckling Ralegh and Keymis (another member of the school) inspired Tamburlaine's last unwilling renunciation of South America and Faustus's first dream of power in terms of Guiana and the Madre de Dios. It is probable also that we can thank Ralegh and Keymis for Tamburlaine's knowledge of gunnery. Harriot's influence on Marlowe's astronomical metaphor has been mentioned earlier; so also that of Heraclitus, who is comemmorated in the poet's "durable fire" image. Lastly the school's study of the occult furnished beast symbols and the metaphor of the sun god and moon goddess, echoes of which are present in Tamburlaine.

If, therefore, Ralegh's circle cannot be proved to have made a constructive contribution to Marlowe's religious beliefs, it fed his natural taste for a thorough-going examination of ancient dogma and slogans, and, as it were, confirmed him in the cool rationalism he shared with Ralegh, Harriot, and many another brilliant and versatile man of his time. In addition it broadened his already broad cultural interests by bringing him, through the influence of men like Harriot, Keymis, and, of course, Ralegh, to the investigation of such diverse subjects as occultism, astronomy, geography, gunnery, and stoicism. It is this very spirit of tireless inquiry that was bone and fibre of the best of the Renaissance.

Taken in conjunction with his earlier university studies, it equals Marlowe, scholar and thinker - a fitting antithesis to Marlowe, man of action. It is this personal dualism which furnishes the psychological framework of this chapter. It is something to which Ralegh, Jonson, Watson, and many others subscribed, and it may be called "the Renaissance paradox of character".

If the future had reserved for Marlowe a more decisive encounter with the Privy Council on the charges that brought him up from Scadbury to London on May 18, 1593, the poet never lived to see it. Ten days after his arrest that lusty and aspiring mind had been stopped forever and in a manner as violent and thereby as typical of that era as anything the author of Tamburlaine himself might have conceived. The circumstances of Christopher Marlowe's death, rid as they now are of centuries of distortion and obscurity, are the fitting crown to six years precociously crammed with danger, intrigue, and intellectual excitement.

Our principal authority on Marlowe's death is an account of the inquest held by William Danby and returned by him into Chancery. On May 30, at ten in the morning, Christopher Marlowe and three companions, Robert Poley, Ingram Frizer, and Nicholas Skeres, met in an inn kept by Eleanor Bull, widow, of Deptford Strand. Going into a private room, the four men were in close conversation until dinner time. After they had dined together, they walked in the garden

attached to the inn until six o'clock, when they returned to the house "& there together and in company supped".[1] After supper, William Danby's account runs on, a quarrel arose between Frizer and Marlowe, as to who should pay the reckoning; the dispute grew hot until presently "it so befell that the said Christopher Morley (another variant of "Marlowe") on a sudden & of his malice toward the said Ingram aforementioned then and there maliciously drew the dagger of the said Ingram ... and with the same dagger the said Christopher Morley then and there maliciously gave the aforesaid Ingram two wounds in his head of the length of two inches & of the depth of a quarter of an inch..,"[2] This affront the "aforementioned Ingram" could in nowise tolerate"... and so it befell in that affray that the said Ingram, in defence of his life with the dagger aforesaid ... gave the said Christopher then and there a mortal wound over his right eye of the depth of two inches & of the width of one inch..."[3]

Such was the presumably bona fide conclusion of William Danby. As in the Bradley case a "se defendendo" verdict was returned, and, four weeks after Marlowe's burial, Frizer, according to the ms. index and Calendar of the Patent Rolls for "35 Elizabeth" (1593), was issued a pardon by the Queen.

1. John Leslie Hotson, The Death of Christopher Marlowe, (Cambridge, 1925), p. 32.
2. Ibid, p. 32.
3. Ibid, p. 33.

And there, in the Elizabethan view, the matter ended. Posterity has, however, been slower to concur in that earlier verdict of the coroner's jury. The more suspicious interpreters of this valuable account of the inquest which was discovered by Hotson have their reasons for wondering. Principal of these is the "coincidence" of Marlowe's death coming just about the time when it appeared that something might "break" in connection with the poet's mysterious arrest. The letter written by Kyd to Puckering shortly after Marlowe's death is, as I have before suggested, a clue to the cause of that arrest. Could Ralegh, ask these critics of Danby's centuries-old findings, a peer whose reputation - and perhaps even whose head - might be brought in peril by any enforced or voluntary disclosures concerning the operations of the School of Night, have thought he had sufficient reason to want that rash and unpredictable young Marlowe out of the way? And were there not other prominent aristocrats in Marlowe's circle - Derby, Northumberland, Carey, the Walsinghams - who might have cause to fear the effect of uncomfortable pressure by the Privy Council on Marlowe's discretion and secrecy? Perhaps, this school of detection argues, the coroner's jury had bowed to stronger arguments than those dictated by a zeal to see justice done or a solicitude for Marlowe's good name, and brought back a verdict favorable to Frizer. After all, these sceptics continue, the long and apparently prearranged meeting between these

four men at Deptford had something rather peculiar about it. There is even a faintly suspicious air about some of the evidence. What of those wounds in Frizer's head, for example? Marlowe must indeed have been impotent in his rage not to have punished Frizer's head more severely than the coroner's report indicated. Isn't it possible that the three survivors of the brawl murdered the poet for an unknown reason, concocted the story which the coroner's jury seems to have swallowed whole, and then proceeded to make the alibi plausible in every detail by leaving "Marlowe's mark" on Frizer's head?

Perhaps the strongest evidence for the sceptic position can be found in recent disclosures about the characters of Marlowe's companions. Poley is the key figure. A probable associate of Marlowe's from the poet's Cambridge days, he was in the employ of Mr. Secretary Walsingham and doubtless acquainted with Marlowe's patron and the son of Marlowe's patron. His role in the Babington plot and the plot's ultimate disclosure was one of fabulous intrigue, betrayal, and ultimate ambiguity, the sort of thing, in fact, that one would expect from a man who had once boasted: "Marry it is no matter, for I will swear and forswear myself rather than I will accuse myself to do me any harm."[1] He was, as Boas has said, "the very genius of the Elizabethan underworld."[2]

1. Frederick S. Boas, Marlowe and His Circle; a Biographical Survey, (Oxford: 1929), p. 45.
2. Ibid, p. 122.

Yet the integrity of such a man seems never to have been questioned by William Danby or his jury. Poley's companions at the scene of Marlowe's death had also been involved in escapades of questionable, though unequal, fragrance. Frizer was a servant to Mr. Thomas Walsingham and so himself unquestionably more to Marlowe than the casual acquaintance-of-a-day. With Skeres he was later accused of attempts to swindle a young Elizabethan gull, named Woodleff, who, though he doubtless deserved everything he got, was also doubtless more than commonly imposed upon, even in that era of inspired swindling. Skeres, a servant to the Earl of Essex and a man with a prison record, seems to have had the lowest criminal stature of the three. Beside writing a notable question mark over the probity of any testimony they might choose to give, the group taken altogether is glowingly symbolic of the range of Marlowe's interests - interests which could travel a spectrum from the blue-nosed Careys, Raleghs, and Northumberlands of Elizabethan England, through the median line of the poets, Watson and Kyd, and so on down, via the subtle Machiavellian viciousness of a Poley to the more gaudy baseness of a Frizer and a Skeres.

The anti-Danbyites are opposed by a group more cool-blooded and resigned, which includes the thoughtful minds of Hotson and Boas. These find some significance even in the terrified testimony of Kyd that he found his former

roommate "intemperate and of a cruel heart,"[1] and given to "rashness in attempting soden pryvie iniuries to men."[2] But still more significant to them is the valorous impetuosity of certain of Marlowe's previous exploits. The Marlowe of the Bradley duel and the Holywell - Street altercation they find not altogether incompatible with the Marlowe of William Danby's report. Never, it is true, does the coroner openly anathematize Marlowe as the youthful tyrant described by his companions at Deptford. That would be impertinent in a semi-legal report. Instead the poet is interpreted objectively and yet tellingly in all the summer lightning of his sudden piques and onslaughts.

Again this group of less suspicious critics have found an excuse for Marlowe's conjectural violence at Deptford in the prevailing temper of the age. "Word and blow followed fast in those Italianate days,"[3] says Hotson, doubtless not having to think far for examples in the lives of Bradley, Watson, and Ben Jonson, as well as in the poet's own, and Marlowe was, as Boas wisely knew, "the most Italianate of Renaissance Englishmen."[4] He would have his head broken like a Borgia and not like a Jack Wilton. It is that Latin quality in his English vigor that sets the stamp of uniqueness even before that of final authenticity upon his Renaissance pretensions and adds the last stroke of color

1. John Bakeless, Op. Cit., p. 170.
2. Ibid, p. 168.
3. John Leslie Hotson, Op. Cit., p. 41.
4. Frederick S. Boas, Op. Cit., p. 137.

to this portrait of Christopher Marlowe, man of his era.

CHAPTER II

HUMANISM

The humanistic outlook on life that Marlowe shares with many of the other literary great of his age is an agreeable disease affecting even the characters in his plays. It would be pleasant and profitable work sometime to prepare a comparative analysis of the learning of Marlowe's characters and of Chaucer's. I believe that whoever undertook such an analysis would not be long in observing that, in comparison with Faustus's easy mastery of "learning's golden gifts", all the erudition of a Chanticleer or a Pandarus looks rather strained and pretentious. The fact is that Marlowe lived in an age when learning was swiftly becoming the most popular of currencies, and whether he was writing of a fourteenth-century peasant-conqueror or a fourteenth-century English King he must make his characters talk at all times with a facile aptness of learned allusion that a Canterbury shoemaker's son no less than the bricklayer, Jonson, had not been slow to acquire. Thus it is that Tamburlaine, the Scythian bandit of no apparent schooling, talks in correct, even resplendent blank verse, knows Greek mythology, Persian history, and the classics with a thoroughness that would shame a Cambridge don, and, in general, sings the delights of "knowledge infinite" with a conviction that would have warmed the heart of Francis Bacon. Thus it is that Baldock, the stately-seeming Sybarite of Edward II's inner circle, might well be mistaken for a spiritual cousin-

german to the Canterbury shoemaker's son, if not for that scholarly young gentleman himself. To Edward's blue-nosed request for a statement of his lineage he replies with an intellectual hauteur that no College of Heralds can give.

"My name is Baldock, and my gentrie
I fetched from Oxford, not from Heraldrie"[1]

But it is Faustus, a man of mean birth - perhaps it is only a commonplace of the subconscious that all Marlowe's most striking characters should be low-born - who is surely the bravest pretender in English fiction to the title of ideal Renaissance scholar.

A close identification of all the manifold allusions that flow effortlessly from the mouth of almost every Marlowe character of any prominence is meat for the self-acknowledged source-gatherer. My purpose in this chapter will be to catalogue allusions according to their general nature, to evaluate the spirit rather than the source of a character's learning, all with the object of presenting a consistent image of the quality of humanism as it appears in the male persons of the plays. My method will be to study the plays not in their chronological order but as they contribute most effectively to the object I have in mind. The order I shall observe, then, will be one of climax rather than of history.

I have indicated previously the sense in which I

1. Edward II, ll. 1045-1046.

understand the word "humanism". Nothing, however, can be lost by defining it more closely in this chapter. "Humanism", then, should be understood in the ordinary Webster's sense of "polite learning", with emphasis, of course, upon the special Renaissance connotation of "classical learning".

Marlowe's male characters, like Marlowe himself, appear to have been avid students of classical mythology. In this field we will find a few especially popular subjects of reference. One is the cosmic battle between Jove and Saturn for the throne of Heaven. Tamburlaine alludes to it when he says to the defeated Cosroe:

> "The thirst of raigne and sweetnes of a crown,
> That causde the eldest sonne of heauenly Ops,
> To thrust his doting father from his chaire,
> And place himselfe in the Emperiall heauen,
> Moon'd me to manage armes against thy state." [1]

And, immediately afterwards, Usumcasane, one of Tamburlaine's generals, has the same epic conflict in mind when he dwells with cool materialism on the favors that Tamburlaine's followers may expect now that Cosroe has been defeated:

> "For as when Iove did thrust old Saturn down,
> Neptune and Dis gain'd each of them a Crowne:
> So do we hope to raign in Asia,
> If Tamburlaine be plac'd in Persea."[2]

Another favorite of Marlowe's men is the Danae legend. By observing an analogy between his own case and that of the lovers of Danae, Edward II welcomes back his

1. Tamburlaine, ll. 863-867.
2. Ibid, ll. 887-890.

early favorite, Gaveston.

"For as the louers of faire Danae
When she was lockt up in a brasen tower
Desirde her more, and waxt outragious,
So did it sure with me...."[1]

And, when Spencer, a favorite of Edward II's later days, sends a messenger to France to buy off in advance any help that Queen Isabel's cause might have received, he does so with this caution:

"Therefore be gon in hast, and with aduice
Bestowe that treasure on the lords of Fraunce,
That therwith all enchaunted like the guarde,
That suffered Ioue to passe in showers of golde
To Danae, all aid may be denied
To Isabell the Queene...."[2]

The romance of Pygmalion and Galatea is at least twice the source of a comparison. Once it figures in the alluring bribes with which Callapine, Bajazeth's son, tempts his keeper, Almeda, to give him his freedom:

"The Grecian virgins shall attend on thee,
Skilful in musicke and in amorous laies:
As faire as was Pigmalions Iuory gyrle,
Or louely Io metamorphosed."[3]

The allusion to Io illustrates how a Marlowe character can

1. Edward II, ll. 855-858.
2. Ibid, ll. 1573-1578.
3. Tamburlaine, ll. 2527-2530.

rarely introduce one image based on a myth but that the first allusion must immediately father another. Aeneas also uses the Pygmalion - Galatea legend when he weeps over the Carthaginian landscape, seeing in it some similarity to his ravished Troy and in the stone before him the image of dead Priam:

> "O yet this stone doth make Aeneas weepe,
> And would my prayers (as Pigmalions did)
> Could give it life, that vnder his conduct
> We might saile back to Troy...." [1]

Jason's voyage to Colchis after the golden fleece tempts Tamburlaine to one of his numerous allusions, while Ithamore, the tool of Barabas, the Jew, who aspires to all the learning of his social superiors, introduces the same legend into a distinctly ludicrous situation. Tamburlaine thinks the spoils of Damascus will prove as rich to his conquering army

> "As was to Iason Colchos golden fleece," [2]

while Ithamore, during a bawdy courtship scene with the courtesan, Bellamira, introduces a ludicrous sequence of classical analogies in this fashion:

> "Content, but we will leaue this paltry land,
> And saile from hence to Greece, to Louely Greece,
> I'le be thy Iason, thou my golden Fleece". [3]

Of theother various mythological references one of the most effective - and the most incongruous - is the Mohammedan Orcanes's retelling of the Proserpina legend in

1. Dido, ll. 310-313.
2. Tamburlaine, l. 1647.
3. The Jew of Malta, ll. 1806-1808.

a somewhat vengeful spirit.

"O thou that swaiest the region vnder earth,
And art a King as absolute as Ioue,
Come as thou didst in fruitfull Sicilie,
Suruaieng all the glories of the land.
And as thou took'st the faire Proserpina,
Ioying the fruit of Ceres garden plot,
For loue, for honor, and to make her Queene,
So for iust hate, for shame, and to subdew
This proud contemner of thy dreadfull power,
Come once in furie and suruay his (Tamburlaine's) pride,
Haling him headlong to the lowest hell."[1]

Many a Marlowe character has dipped deeper into ancient authors than might be indicated by the fore-going mythological extracts. A paltry messenger in Tamburlaine, for instance, knows his Aeneid quite as well as the gentle-born Zenocrate does, and Tamburlaine himself has read the Iliad and the Roman poets. What poet the conqueror has in mind when he refers to Corinna, the beautiful Theban poetess, it is hard to say. Possibly he is thinking vaguely of Pindar, who learned some of his art from Corinna and was occasionally vanquished by her in public contest. "Lesbia" is, of course, the notorious inspiration of Catullus. Of dying Zenocrate the doting conqueror says:

1. Tamburlaine, ll. 4011-4021.

"And had she liu'd before the siege of Troy,
Hellen, whose beauty sommond Greece to armes,
And drew a thousand ships to Tenedos,
Had not bene nam'd in Homer's Iliads:
Her name had bene in euery line he wrote:
Or had those wanton Poets, for whose byrth
Olde Rome was proud, but gasde a while on her
Nor Lesbia, nor Corrinna had been nam'd
Zenocrate had bene the argument
Of euery Epigram or Elegie."[1]

When a messenger comes to Zenocrate with news that her father and a former suitor, the King of Arabia, mean to challenge the invincible Tamburlaine, he brings a still more surprising talent for apt classical allusion.

"Madam, your father and th' Arabian King,
The first affecter of your excellence,
Comes now as Turnus gainst Eneas did,
Armed with lance into the Egyptian fields
Ready for battaile gainst my Lord the King."[2]

And Zenocrate, with the same ease at sustaining a learned analogy - especially a classical one - that I noted earlier in the case of Usumcasane, exclaims:

"But as the Gods to end the Troyans toile,
Preuented Turnis of Lauinia

1. Tamburlaine, ll. 3054-3063.
2. Ibid, ll. 2160-2164.

And fatally enricht Eneas loue,
So for a final Issue to my griefes,
To pacifie my countrie and my loue
Must Tamburlaine by their resistlesse powers
With vertue of a gentle victorie,
Conclude a league of honor.....[1]

When Tamburlaine himself chooses not to be satisfied merely with these polite cates of Renaissance reading matter, he turns characteristically to a field that would be of special interest to one of his megalomaniacal turn of mind - the literature of conquest. He has steeped himself in the heroic moments of earlier Caesars. He is familiar with the Persian Xerzes, whose army,

".....which by fame is said
To drinke the mightie Parthian Araris
Was but a handful to that we will haue."[2]

And he is quite as casual in his reference to "Belus, Ninus, and great Alexander". In Babylon where these three

"Have rode in triumph, triumph's Tamburlaine."[3]

The barons and courtiers about Edward II, are a particularly learned group of men. And yet Edward himself cannot be usurped, intellectually at least. In the final crisis of his critical reign he asks his minions, Spencer and Baldock, to try with him the consolations of philosophy -

1. Tamburlaine, ll. 2174-2181.
2. Ibid, ll. 613-615.
3. Ibid, ll. 4181-4182.

a typically Renaissance release from material afflications!

"Come Spencer, come Boldocke, come sit downe by
me,
Make triall now of that philosophie
That in our famous nurseries of artes
Thou suckedst from Plato and from Aristotle"[1]

The blunt Lancaster knows his Pliny[2] and the blunter Mortimer, Senior, the most famous of classical lovers, a feat that requires not only wide reading but that gift for synthesis which is the sine qua non of the best scholars. Mortimer uses his knowledge to extenuate Edward's devotion to Gaveston.

"Great Alexander loude Ephestion,
The conquering Hercules for Hilas wept,
And for Patroclus sterne Archillis droopt:
And not kings onelie, but the wisest men,
The Romaine Tullie loued Octauius,
Graue Socrates, wilde Alcibiades:
Then let his grace, whose youth is flexible,
And promiseth as much as we can wish,
Freely enjoy that vaine light-headed earle,
For riper yeares will weane him from such
toyes."[3]

Another striking category of learned allusions are those having to do with astronomy. It appears that, for

1. Edward II., ll 1883-1886.
2. Ibid, ll. 825-829.
3. Ibid, ll. 689-698.

literary purposes at least, Tamburlaine and his associates and Doctor Faustus never went to school to Copernicus. Their cosmography is pretty generally Ptolemaic, though often searching in its erroneous way. An analysis of Faustus's view of the nature and operations of the physical heavens will be incorporated later into a somewhat extended judgment of the doctor's humanism, with which I shall conclude this chapter. For the present it should be profitable to direct a glance or two at the astronomical learning of the characters in Tamburlaine. In general one will find that learning betrays a highly personal bias, the result, no doubt, of everyone's eagerness to confound the wonder of the heavens with the superior wonder that is Tamburlaine. The conqueror likes especially to see himself as the eye of day, illuminating the "turning spheres".

> Now cleare the triple region of the aire,
> And let the maiestie of heauen beholde
> Their Scourge and Terrour treade on Emperours...
> For I the chiefest Lamp of all the earth,
> First rising in the East with milde aspect,
> But fixed now in the Meridian line
> Will send vp fire to your turning spheares,
> And cause the Sun to borrow light of you".[1]

At another time he fancies himself as thoroughly unlike his weakling son, Calyphas, in that he, Tamburlaine, partakes of the "incorporeall spirit"[2] which moves in Jove himself. It

1. Tamburlaine. ll. 1474-1476; 1480-1484.
2. Ibid, l. 378 8.

is that spirit

> "Which makes me valiant, proud, ambitious,
> Ready to leuie power against thy throne,
> That I might monue the turning spheares of heauen."[1]

The Ptolemaic world view and that highly congratulatory tendency in some way to identify Tamburlaine. With it the hero himself shares with those who know him, notably Menaphon, who makes Tamburlaine's eyes hardly less marvellous than those of Cuculain, the Ulster hero, or those of Chaucer's Fame. His "piercing instruments of sight" are "fiery cyrcles" that

> ".....beare encompassed
> A heauen of heauenly bodies in their spheares."[2]

Gracefully learned as are all these men - Tamburlaine, Edward, and the others - their scholarship usually comes second to some one or more preoccupations of a different sort. Tamburlaine, for example, would prize the treasure of the Indian mines and all it signified in the way of power above the argosy to be had from books, and Edward is first and last a King and a libertine. Even Baldock, the man of the people, who resembles a young Cambridge scholar with ambition and talent sufficient to propel him up through "the rigid stratification of Elizabethan society,"[3] is

1. Tamburlaine, ll. 3790-3792.
2. Ibid, ll. 468-470.
3. John Bakeless, Op. Cit., p. 7.

"...inwardly licentious enough
And apt for any kinde of villanie".[1]

Except for several unscholarly moments notably those in which he is absorbed in the charms of Helen, it is Faustus, the doctor of Wittenberg, and he alone, who is every man's dream of the Renaissance humanist. He is so, even when his burning thirst for information leads him beyond reasonable human achievement to cosmic presumption and blasphemy. Though he has sold his soul for the precarious glory of a wisdom unparalleled in mortal experience, his motive was no mean one, and we can consider him, not a distortion but an awe-inspiring extension of that grandest of fifteenth-and sixteenth-century legends, first propagated by More and Erasmus.

The tragedy of Faustus's yearning to pass beyond the bournes of what man may safely know is introduced in all its comprehensive gloominess by the chorus.

"So soone hee profites in Diuinitie,
The fruit full plot of Scholerisme grac't,
That shortly he was grac't with Doctors name,
Excelling all, whose sweete delight disputes
In heauenly matters of theologie....
And glutted now with learnings golden giftes,
He surffets vpon cursed Negromancy."[2]

1. Edward II, ll. 770-771.
2. Doctor Faustus, ll. 15-19; 24-25.

Immediately after, we are shown Faustus in his study. Here is the image in sustained soliliquy of a man so wonderfully wise that there is nothing more in the way of legitimate knowledge for him to acquire. Here is a man so thoroughly familiar with every phase of every field in the total organization of human knowledge that he has lost the faculty of comforting himself with the "golden gifts" of a long and searching application and can see nothing beyond the limitations and fallacies in all he knows. He is not merely "glutted" with the tremendous body of learning he has mastered; he is burning to be after something more brilliant, more esoteric than anything he has hitherto experienced. His repudiation of all his learned accomplishments betrays the jaded taste of that phoenix of all scholarship, the hyper-sophisticate.

He has nothing but gratitude for what Aristotle has given him; the sad thing is that Aristotle can give him nothing more.

> "Sweete Analutikes tis thou hast rauisht me,
> Bene disserere est finis logices,
> Is to dispute well, Logickes chiefest end...?
> Then reade no more, thou has attaind the end."[1]

So he summons Galen to defend himself

> "Summum bonum medicinae sanitas ...
> Why Faustus, hast thou not attained that end?
> Is not thy common talke sound Aphorismes?

1. Doctor Faustus, ll. 34-36; 38.

Are not they billes hung vp as monuments,
Whereby whole Citties haue escapt the plague,
And thousand desprate maladies beene easde,
Yet art thou still but Faustus, and a man.
Wouldst thou make man to liue eternally?
Or being dead, raise them to life againe?
Then this profession were to be esteemd."[1]

Thereupon he waves aside Galen and the whole body of physic, which deny him the logical - if blasphemous - consummation of all his doctor's art.

He next turns his jaundiced eye upon the law and particularly upon its stately representative Justinian, Law, he finds, will not do at all; he is bored by its absurd distinctions, its trivialities. All law is pettifoggery; he dismisses it as "Too seruile and illiberall for me."[2]

He has now all but completed his dry, pansophic circle, and only one branch of learning remains.

"When all is done Diuinitie is best.
Ieromes Bible, Faustus, view it well."[3]

There is still no sign of impiety; there is even a ring of affection in his voice as he hales his old companion into the white-hot beam of his destructive intelligence. But he can get no further than these two gloomy teachings: "Stipendium peccati mors est" and "si pecasse

1. Doctor Faustus, ll. 44; 46-54.
2. Doctor Faustus, l. 64.
3. Ibid, ll. 65-66.

negamus fallinur & nulla est in nobis veritas."[1] They stick in his throat. If the reward of sin is death and if he lies who says he does not sin, where is the man who thinks to avoid damnation? Upon that question Faustus snaps his last restraint and turns to the forbidden books of magic lying at hand. In them he thinks half guiltily to find an accelerated compensation for a lifetime spent in the Limbo only of intellectual pursuits.

> "These Metaphisickes of Magicians
> And Negromanticke bookes are heauenly...
> I, these are those that Faustus most desires.
> O what a world of profit and delight,
> Of power, of honor, of omnipotence,
> Is promised to the studious Artisan?"[2]

When Valdes and Cornelius appear - those two scholarly arch-conspirators against the secrets of the Most High - Faustus jubilantly rehearses for them the outcome of his recent conflict. He concludes with a boastful reference to the rare esteem in which he is already held and to the inevitability of greater honors. There is no other speech of his in which the pride of his intellect has been better displayed. Even more than Marlowe's other men Faustus can be expected to make his English a honeycomb of classical names and references.

> "Philosophy is odious and obscure,
> Both Law and Phisicke are for pettie wits,
> Diuinitie is basest of the three,

1. Doctor Faustus, ll. 67 and 69.
2. Ibid, ll. 77-78; 80-83.

Vnpleasant, harsh, contemptible and vilde,
And I that haue with concise sylogismes
Graueld the Pastors of the Germaine Church,
And made the flowring pride of Wertenberge
Swarme to my Problemes as the infernall spirits
On sweet Musaeus when he came to hell,
Will be as cunning as Agrippa was,
Whose shadowes made all Europe honor him."[1]

From the moment he strikes his dark bargain with Mephistopheles Faustus is involved in a feverish pursuit of all those intellectual experiences that were closed to him before, in the days of his cultural and religious orthodoxy. The only exception is the memorably sensuous scene in which Helen of Troy is brought back to be his concubine. The two most striking illustrations of how boundless is his appetite for knowledge are the scene in which Mephistopheles gives him the books containing all the innermost secrets of necromancy, astronomy, and botany and the scene in which the two wage a learned dispute on astronomy.

The first develops in three hectic cycles of intensity. True to his promise of many sorts of revelation, Mephistopheles first presents the avid Faustus with a book containing an introduction to necromancy. But its scope is much too limited to satisfy Faustus.

"Thankes Mephistophilus, yet faine would I have a booke wherein I might beholde al spels and in cantations,

1. Doctor Faustus, ll. 134-137; 140-146.

that I might raise up spirits when I please."

Mephistopheles gives him the second book, but reckless Faustus will not let the matter end there.

"Now would I have a booke where I might see all characters and planets of the heauens, that I might know their motions and dispositions."

Mephistopheles produces the third book, and still Faustus is not perfectly satisfied. His curiosity scales the very peak of presumption in one last dauntless request.

"Nay let me haue one booke more, and then I haue done, wherein I might see al plantes, hearbes and trees that grow upon the earth."[1]

And Mephistopheles, to appease this greedy sage whose soul he prizes to the point that he will suffer any inconvenience to attain it, gives him the last book.

The preoccupation of the learned one of Wittenberg with astronomy has its precedent in Tamburlaine. The famous dialogue on astronomy in Faustus has an obvious interest in that it reveals a typical accomplishment of the Renaissance humanist, and it is valuable for two other reasons. In the first place it forges a link, indirectly to be sure, between Faustus and the School of Night, for it conjures up the learned discussions in which Marlowe is reputed to have engaged members of Ralegh's learned group but particularly Harriot. In the second place it is symptomatic of a

1. Doctor Faustus, ll. 598-600; 602-604; 606-608.

tendency of literary men of the Renaissance - John Milton notably - to stick to Ptolemaic cosmography, for poetic purposes at least, even though some of the most advanced men of the age had begun to recognize the theories of Copernicus.

The dialogue on astronomy in Faustus opens upon the scholar's inviting Mephistopheles to join him in a learned argument.

"Come Mephastophilis, let vs dispute againe,
And argue of of diuine Astrologie.
Tel me, are there many heauens aboue the moone?
Are all celestial bodies but one globe
As is the substance of this centricke earth?"

Mephistopheles answers:

"As are the elements, such are the spheres,
Mutually folded in each others orbe,
And Faustus,
All iointly moue vpon one axletree,
Whose terminine if tearmed the worlds wide pole,
Nor are the names of Saturne, Mars, or Iupiter
Faind, but are erring starres.

Fau. But tell me haue they all one motion?
Both situ & tempore.
Me. All ioyntly moue from East to West in 24 houres vpon the poles of the Zodiake."

The fact that Faustus obviously considers these disclosures the very commonplaces of scholarship is once more

earnest of the depth of his scholarship. But his superiority does not stop there. In the sequel to the lines already quoted he quite overshadows his supernatural opponent-in-dispute.

"Tush, these slender trifles Wagner (his man) can
decide,
Hath Mephastophilus no greater skill?
Who knowes not the double motion of the plannets?
The first is finisht in a naturall day
The second thus, as Saturne in 30 yeares,
Iupiter in 12, Mars in 4, the Sunne, Venus,
And Mercury in a yeare; the Moone in 28 dayes.
Tush, these are fresh mens suppositions...."[1]

A few more routine questions on this subject are put by Faustus and answered with no conspicuous originality by Mephistopheles, and then Faustus is suddenly and alarmingly off on another tack:

"...tell me who made the world?"[2]

Finding that he can expect no very great satisfaction from the answers of his demon patron, Faustus enters himself upon his sad pursuit of the ultimate reality. In Wagner's words:

" Learned Faustus
To know the secrets of Astronomy,
Grauen in the booke of Ioues hie firmament
Did mount himself to scale Olympus top,

1. Doctor Faustus, II. 644-668.
2. Ibid, l. 678.

Being seated in a chariot burning bright,
Drawne by the strength of yoky dragons neckes:
He now is gone to prove Cosmography."[1]

And his trained mind given godspeed by Lucifer's talisman sops up information with uncanny persistency.

The other pleasures that Faustus chooses to buy with his new power are as typical of his fine-spun intellectual temper as these.

"Haue not I made blinde Homer sing to me
Of Alexanders loue and Enons death,
And hath not he that built the walles of Thebes
With rauishing sound of his melodious harp
Made musicke with my Mephastophilis?"[2]

Those Germans who are privileged to see and admire his powers of magic do not ask to be dazzled by showers of gold, by sudden personal success, or by the gift of a handsome wife. The character of their requests reveals them as hardly less humanistic in their interests than Faustus himself. They will be satisfied with no banalities of supernatural experience. The Emperor or Germany, for example, asks Faustus to recall the authentic spirits of Alexander the Great and of his paramour,

"Both in their right shapes, gesture, and attire
They usde to weare during their time of life."[3]

1. Doctor Faustus, ll. 792-798.
2. Ibid, ll. 637-641.
3. Ibid, ll. 1045-1046.

And he asks like a man who would not be long about spotting an anachronism. The "first scholler" is no less an antiquarian. He enters a seemingly sexless request that he and his companions may see "that Helen of Greece ... the admirablest Lady that euer liued."[1] And Faustus answers:

"You shall behold that pearelesse dame of Greece,
No other waies for pompe and maiestie
Then when sir Paris crost the seas with her,
And brought the spoiles to rich Dardania."[2]

All these men seem to share a passion for historical accuracy!

The conjuring of Helen from the spirit world all but completes Faustus's undoing. He is as captivated by her loveliness as his Trojan predecessor was and insists that the hardpressed Mephistopheles give her to him for his paramour. Mephistopheles cannot but comply, and Faustus welcomes Troy's lovely Nemesis with a purple outburst of blank verse. The lines are purest poetry pied with apt allusions to Homer and the classic myths, in which matchless lyrical eloquence has worked the final sea change in Faustus's scholarship.

"I wil be Paris, and for loue of thee
Insteede of Troy shal Wertenberge be sackt,
And I will combate with weake Menelaus,
And weare thy colours on my plumed crest:
Yea I wil wound Archillis in the heele,

1. Doctor Faustus, ll. 1248-1249.
2. Ibid, ll. 1258-1261.

And then returne to Helen for a kisse.....
Brighter art thou then flaming Iupiter,
When he appeard to haplesse Semele,
More louely then the monarke of the skie,
In wanton Arethusaea azurde armes".....[1]

Faustus winds up his blasphemous career just as he bagan it - as the thoroughgoing humanist. He interprets the anguish of his last hour of alternate despair and repentance gloriously in terms of his far-ranging scholarship. He has an ancient source at hand to furnish a gloss to every pang. That beautiful resetting of Ovid's sensualist's prayer--"O lente, lente currite noctis equi" - has been cited in Chapter I. And there are other instances. At one time the doctor, in an ecstacy of egoistical resistance to his fate, wishes there were some truth in the Pythagorian theory of metampsychosis, for then his soul, by being transferred to some wild beast, could escape punishment. Simpson has pointed out that the doctrine appearing just at this moment is not as hollow as it sounds. We must remember, he says, that Faustus is "the supreme embodiment of Renaissance feeling, and that in this point he faithfully reflects the spirit of his creator".[2] Mr. Simpson might have progressed a step further and added that in this moment Faustus is also being supremely true to himself, for he is interpreting his last mortal suffering in terms of the

1. Doctor Faustus, ll. 1335-1340, 1343-1346.
2. Percy Simpson, "Marlowe's Tragical History of Dr. Faustus", English Association Essays and Studies, Vol. 14, (Oxford: 1929), p. 27.

only type of experience fundamentally and eternally real to him - scholarship. It is also characteristic of Faustus that he knows himself well enough in the end to identify properly the ultimate cause of his loss of eternal life.

"O would I had neuer seene Wertenberge, neuer read booke."[1]

That poignant exclamation is no interdiction of learning in and of itself. Rather it is an implicit avowal of the enormous significance of learning in the life of the Renaissance man and, one might almost say, an implicit counsel to the wise humanist to use his powers circumspectly and wisely. But whether with doctrinal intentions or no, Marlowe has synthesized in the character of the learned doctor of Wittenberg a salient fact of the Renaissance character - the love of learning's golden gifts, the desire forever to be transcending the conventional boundaries of knowledge, and to pace with some few immortals - like Francis Bacon and, to a lesser extent, Jonson, Ralegh, Sidney, and Marlowe - the untrammeled country of mind.

1. Doctor Faustus, ll. 1376-1377.

CHAPTER III

The Desire for Unrestricted Worldly Achievement

For all Leslie Spence believes that Marlowe has been true to the historical perspective of his principal sources in Tamburlaine, there is little doubt that aspects of Marlowe's first great play distinctively reflect the era in which it was written. The predominant mood of Tamburlaine is quite as worldly and materialistic as the mood of Faustus is predominately spiritual; yet both are of the Renaissance. That many-sided age in which Christopher Marlowe lived had room in its broad bosom for the spiritual restlessness of Kitt, Fineux, and the School of Night to no greater degree than for the intense acquisitiveness brought on by the explorations of Ralegh, Keymis, and Sir Francis Drake. It is the spirit of the latter group that provides the major impulse to character evolution in Tamburlaine.

Miss Ethel Seaton has commemorated the Elizabethan interest in maps,[1] which led Marlowe, in the spirit of student and merchant-venturer alike, to the Theatrum Orbis Terrarum and the Turcicum Imperium for the intricate geographic data he needed for Tamburlaine. And Miss Bradbrook has mentioned the probable influence on Marlowe of Ralegh's and Keymis's first-hand accounts of their adventures in exploration,

1. Ethel Seaton, "Marlowe's Map," English Association Essays and Studies, Vol. 10,(Oxford: 1924), p. 13.

tracing that influence in details no less than in the whole broader spirit of Tamburlaine. What neither has spoken of explicitly but what the research of both implies is the evidence of a proud and ambitious thirst for territory and the wealth and power thereby assured which resulted from Elizabethan efforts to harness the hemispheres. Yet Marlowe has recorded that spirit faithfully through Tamburlaine's principal characters and particularly in the person of the Scythian conquerer himself. Perhaps every man of that age could not have been a Tamburlaine holding the reins of continents and appropriating the wealth, territory, and self-respect of the crowned heads of empires. But it is time to observe again that a Marlowe hero is always a somewhat exaggerated abstraction of contemporary loyalties and moods that have achieved a normal fruition or smoulder on some subterranean level of individual and national life. In the drama at least the inexplicable transformation from reality to proudest art was, in those pre-Shakespearean days, never more perfectly managed than in the plays of Christopher Marlowe; and we must only be careful to observe the sometimes imperfect distinctions between Marlowe's facts, and the final union of Marlowe's facts and Marlowe's genius.

Before I undertake a somewhat particular analysis of Tamburlaine's high-handed exploitation of contemporary knowledge in geography, I shall first examine those colors of men's minds that were half the inspiration for, half the

result of, this rapidly expanding assurance about the physical world.

Naturally enough it is Tamburlaine himself who shows, to an extent unmatched by any other character in the play, a heady conviction that the rich and expanding world of Marlowe's day was made for his special gratification. The significance of all that has been new-discovered is for him not scientific, or humanistic in the highest sense; it is instead materialistic. Even in the days when, as a proud but beggarly shepherd leading a group of poor visionaries like himself, he plunders the Scythian landscape and prevents the daughter of an emperor on her route to Memphis, he is conscious of extraordinary physical energy, of extraordinary supernatural patronage.

When Magnetes, the Median lord who has been commissioned to lead Zenocrate through Scythia, tells Tamburlaine and his group of bandits that the Cham has promised them special conduct through those regions, the future Scourge of God answers haughtily:

> "But now you see these letters & commandes
> Are countermanded by a greater man:
> And through my prouinces you must expect
> Letters of conduct from my mightinesse,
> If you intend to keep your treasure safe.
> But since I loue to liue at liberty,
> As easely may you get the Souldanes crowne,

As any prizes out of my precinct.
For they are friends who help to weane my state,
Till men and kingdomes help to strengthen it:
And must maintaine my life exempt from seruitude.[1]

Shortly afterward, during his disarmingly self-confident attempt to make love to Zenocrate, he hints at the nature of the supernatural favor he feels he possesses. It is notable that at this point his ambition extends no further than the domination of all Asia from the Persian throne - a rare instance of self-control in Tamburlaine!

"Thy person is more woorth to Tamburlaine,
Than the possession of the Persean crowne,
Which gratious starres haue promist at my birth."[2]

Presently, however, he articulates his hope of even greater dominion in the words with which he tempts Theridamas.

"Forsake thy King and do but ioine with me
And we will triumph ouer all the world."[3]

The mere words "king" and "crown" become obsessive symbols of the sine qua non in mundane triumph, to the attainment of which he will direct all his superb animal and intellectual energies. This rapacious tendency of mind is first evident in the scene which follows upon the Persian Cosroe's

1. Tamburlaine, ll. 217-227.
2. Ibid, ll. 286-288.
3. Ibid. ll, 367-368.

triumph over his weakling king and brother, Mycetes. Menaphon says to Cosroe:

"Your maiestie shall shortly haue your wish,
And ride in triumph through Persepolis."

Cosroe quits the scene just as this tempting statement is being uttered, and Tamburlaine, who has helped Cosroe to the crown, shows that Menaphon's words have perpetuated themselves impressively in his own mind.

"And ride in triumph through Persepolis?
Is it not braue to be a King, Techelles?"...

Usumcasane says:

"To be a King, is halfe to be a God."

But Theridamas adds:

"A God is not so glorious as a King."[1]

The standard of life which makes the possession of innumerable crowns and kingships the symbol of all power and excellence approaches its fulfillment in the words of resounding egoism with which Tamburlaine explains his betrayal of Cosroe.

"Our soules, whose faculties can comprehend
The wondrous architecture of the world;
And measure euery wandring plannets course,
Still climing after knowledge infinite,
And alwaies moouing as the restles Spheares,
Wils vs to weare our selues and neuer rest,

1. Tamburlaine, II. 753-754; ll. 755-756; ll. 761-762.

Untill we reach the ripest fruit of all,
That perfect blisse and sole felicitie,
The sweet fruition of an earthly crowne."[1]

And it reaches that fulfillment during the impressively symbolic, if extravagant, scene in which Tamburlaine celebrates the siege of Damascus with a banquet distinguished by numerous courses of crowns.

Dominating his tireless imperialism is the conviction that the times - the times of Ralegh and Drake - smile beneficently on his ambitions,

"Why then Casane shall we wish for ought
The world afoords in greatest noueltie,
And rest attemptlesse faint and destitute?[2]

And the exhilarated feeling of the confirmed explorer that the earth and sea are forever unfolding new marvels for him to see and subdue,

"I will confute those blind Geographers
That make a triple region in the world,
Excluding Regions which I meane to trace,
And with this pen reduce them to a Map,
Calling the Prouinces Citties and townes
After my name and thine Zenocrate:
Here at Damascus will I make the Point
That shall begin the Perpendicular.[3]

1. Tamburlaine, ll. 872-880.
2. Ibid., ll. 777-779.
3. Ibid., ll. 1715-1722.

His last brilliant stroke of worldly pride, before he goes to encounter that death which even his superior power cannot resist, is to call for a map. By means of this he recapitulates all the matchless campaigns of his career and laments, like any whole-hearted Elizabethan discoverer, the regions as yet uncharted and unsubdued, the inestimable earthly riches that have eluded him. Those words of his disclose the sweeping range of vision one associates with Keats's misnamed "stout Cortez" and the foresight that inspired the Perrys and Byrds of subsequent generations. Greed to invade all the storehouses of the world is there, but there is also vision, the instinct for progress that has many times remade the world. "It is the cry of Alexander reversed in accordance with those new world-conditions that nothing brings home to mind so forcibly as a map."[1]

The conqueror of the threefold world is not alone in recognizing those special gifts that put him leagues in advance of all the other men and conquerors of his day. Menaphon is among the first to bear witness to Tamburlaine's almost superhuman formidability. The description he offers the curious Cosroe is heroic in every sense of the word.

"Of stature tall and straightly fashioned,
Like his desire, lift vpwards and diuine,
So large of lims his ioints so strongly knit,

1. Ethel Seaton, Op. Cit., p. 27.

Such breadth of shoulders as mighty mainely beare
Olde Atlas burthen, twixt his manly pitch,
A perle more worth, than all the world is plaste:
Wherein by curious souveraintie of Art,
Are fixt his piercing instruments of sight:
Whose fiery cyrcles beare encompassed
A heauen of heauenly bodies in their Spheares:...
His lofty brows in foldes, do figure death,
And in their smoothness, amity and life:...
His armes and fingers long and sinowy,
Betokening valour and excess of strength:
In euery part proportioned like the man,
Should make the world subdued to Tamburlaine.[1]

Very shortly after Meander has a similar perception.

"For he was neuer sprong of humaine race,
Since with the spirit of his fearfull pride,
He dares so doubtesly resolue of rule,
And by profession be ambitious."[2]

Though admiration for Tamburlaine's physical prowess usurps all other admirations in the play, it does not prevent other characters from feeling that it is they who have a special earthly destiny to fulfill. Cosroe, who bows out at the end of the second act, Part I, is a splendid figure

1. Tamburlaine, ll. 461-470; ll. 475-476; ll. 481-484.
2. Tamburlaine, ll. 822-825.

of a conqueror. "The thirst of raigne and sweetness of a crown" moves him to challenge the sovereignty of Mycetes, his witless brother. But even when the crown is upon his own head, he will not, as his own words assure us, shut himself up forever in his dominions and be content with the pomp and wealth he has already won. To Ortygius, who crowns him King of Persia, he says:

"And Ioue may neuer let me longer liue,
Then I may seeke to gratify your loue,
And cause the souldiers thatthus honour me,
To triumph ouer many Prouinces."[1]

This desire for dominion and possession is shared by the beggarly Techelles and Usum Casane, Tamburlaine's first followers. Devoted as they are to their shepherd lord, their loyalty does not hinder them from hoping explicitly that they will have power and rich rewards as soon as Tamburlaine begins to "raigne in Asia". Of Tamburlaine Techelles says:

"Me thinks I see kings kneeling at his feet,
And he with frowning browes and fiery lookes,
Spurning their crownes from off their captiue heads."

And Usumcasane answers smoothly:

"And making me and thee, Techelles kinges,
That euen to death will follow Tamburlaine."[2]

1. Tamburlaine, ll. 178-181.
2. Ibid, ll. 251-255.

Tamburlaine's appeal is always half through the magnetism of his own person, half through the luscious bait of lordly promises. He wins Theridamas as he won Techelles and Usum casane by offering dominions.

"Both we will raigne as Consuls of the earth..."[1]

But there are other men greater than Cosroe and Tamburlaine's generals who are loftily convinced of their right to all the spoils of the world. Bajazeth, the rich and puissant Turk, whom Tamburlaine brings lower than any other king he conquers, is one of these men. The words which he instructs the messenger to use in a first attempt to curb the raging ambition of Tamburlaine are memorable for their high presumption, their extreme self-confidence. The ambition of one despot will not brook that of the other, and Bajazeth makes it perfectly clear whose power is stronger to enforce his will by the impressive periods in which he rolls the names of his vast subject lands along his tongue.

"Tell him thy Lord the Turkish Emperour,
Dread Lord of Affrike, Europe and Asia,
Great King and conquerour of Grecia,
The Ocean, Terrene, and the cole-blacke sea,
The high and highest Monarke of the world,
Wils and commands (for say not I intreat)
Not once to set his foot in Affrica,
Or spread his collours in Grecia,
Lease he incurre the furie of my wrath."[2]

1. Tamburlaine, l. 392.
2. Ibid., ll. 940-948.

Orcanes of Natolia and Sigismond of Hungary, those two arch-enemies, who sign a truce in order that the hands of each may be clean to meet the superior threat of Tamburlaine, are also convinced that they are quite the most puissant and privileged personalities of their world. It is natural therefore that there should be an effective and amusing rapport of injured dignities to be glossed over before the desired agreement can be reached. When Sigismond offers his sword, Orcanes says mightily:

> "Stay Sigismond, forgetst thou I am he
> That with the Cannon shooke Vienna walles,
> And made it dance upon the Continent:...
> Forgetst thou that I sent a shower of dartes
> Mingled with powdered shot and fethered steele
> So thick vpon the blink-ey'd burghers heads,
> That thou thy self, then County-Palantine,
> The king of Boheme, and the Austrich Duke,
> Sent Herralds out, which basely on their knees,
> In all your names desirde a truce of me?
> Forgetst thou, that to haue me raise my siege
> Wagons of gold were sent before my tent...?"[1]

And Sigismond, stung by this ungenerous boast, answers:

> "Vienna was besieg'd and I was there,
> Then County-Pallatine, but now a king:
> And what we did, was in extremity:

1. Tamburlaine, ll. 2411-2413; ll. 2416-2424.

But now Orcanes, view my royall hoste,
That hides these plaines, and seems as vast and wide,
As doeth the Desart of Arabia
To those that stand on Badgetha lofty Tower,
Or as the Ocean to the Traueiler
That restes vpon the snowy Appenines:
And tell me whether I should stoope so low,
Or treat of peace with the Natolian king."[1]

The last lines in this self-congratulatory monologue reveal another talent which these minor kings possess and which I have already ascribed to Tamburlaine - a brilliant and extensive geographical sense. Such a sense is at once the cause of imperialism and the result of it; it is the Renaissance man's perogative, which Marlowe shared with many another Elizabethan and with which he succeeded in coloring the ambition of all his male characters. Orcanes had it, as witness the lurid paggage in which he sees the heads of slaughtered Christians carried down the Danube as far as the Mediterranean. This very abuse of fact indicates, as Miss Seaton has shown, that he is thoroughly familiar with a black spot of Elizabethan geography.[2]

"Though from the shortest Northren Paralell,
Vast Gruntland compast with the frozen sea,

1. Tamburlaine, ll. 2428-2438.
2. Op. Cit., p. 33.

Inhabited with tall and sturdy men,
Gyants as huge as hugie Polypheme:
Millions of Souldiers cut the Artick line,
Bringing the strength of Europe to these Armes,
Our Turky blades shal glide through al their
throats,
And make this champion mead a bloody Fen.
Danubius stream that runs to Trebizon,
Shall carie wrapt within his scarlet waues,
As martiall presents to our friends at home
The slaughtered bodies of these Christians.
The Terrene main wherein Danubius fals,
Shall by this battell be the bloody Sea.
The wandring Sailers of proud Italy,
Shall meet these Christians fleeting with the tyde,
Beating in heaps against their argoses..."[1]

Even Mycetes had it and could turn it into the highly effective imagery of strong emotion.

"O where is dutie and allegeance now?
Fled to the Caspean or the Ocean maine?"[2]

One manifestation of it is a typically Renaissance fascination with place-names, which Marlowe had in excess and with which he dowered so many of his characters.

1. Tamburlaine, ll. 2350-2366.
2. Ibid., ll. 109-110.

Notice, for example, the mouth-filling citations with which Ortygius crowns Cosroe.

"And in assurance of desir'd successe,
We here doo crowne thee Monarch of the East,
Emperour of Asia, and of Persea,
Great Lord of Medea and Armenia:
Duke of Affrica and Albania,
Mesopotamia and of Parthia,
East India and the late-discouered Isles,
Chiefe Lord of all the wide vast Uxine sea,
And of the euer raging Caspian Lake:
Long liue Cosroe, mighty Emperour."[1]

Notice also the words with which Orcanes reclaims Callapine, the long-suffering son of Bajazeth.

"Calepinus Cyricelibes, otherwise Cybelius, son and long-suffering son of Bajazeth, by the aid of God and his friend Mahomet, Emperour of Natolia, Ierusalem, Trebizen, Soria, Amasia, Thracia, Illyria, Carmonia, and al the hundred and thirty Kingdomes late contributory to his mighty father. Long liue Callepinus, Emperour of Turky."[2]

Sound argument, however, calls for systematic chronological evidence of Tamburlaine's preoccupation with geography and its function in his own special scheme of worldly ambition. I shall attempt to offer such evidence in the

1. Tamburlaine, ll. 168-177.
2. Ibid., ll. 3111-3117.

subsequent outline of the conqueror's campaign.

As his dying moments with a map indicate, Tamburlaine's sweeping geographical tour de force begins and ends in Asia. His first great bivouac is with Prince Cosroe by the Parthian Araris. Towards this battle site King Mycetes and his army have marched via the "Armenian Desarts"[1] and the "Georgian hills,"[2] localities now recognized by us as parts of Russia. It is here that Mycetes is defeated and the crown of Persia seized by Cosroe, his brother. It is here also that the ambitious Tamburlaine decides to take the first step in his projected conquest of Asia by challenging his late ally's right to the Persian crown. He and his three generals Theridamas, Techelles, and Usumcasane, pursue Cosroe, returning now to Persepolis, the capital of Persia, for a triumphal ride through the streets, and not far from the original battle site they meet and overwhelm him.

The next important maneuver brings us to ancient Constantinople - at that time under Grecian sovereignty - to which Bajazeth, the Turk, and the three tributary kings of Barbary, Morocco, Fez, and Algeria, are laying siege. Bajazeth sees his African dominions threatened by Tamburlaine, who is naturally no longer content to be penned up in Asia with such rich prizes as Greece and the Barbarian provinces within reach. The Turkish king despatches by messenger a

1. Tamburlaine, ll. 537.
2. Ibid., l. 538.

haughty warning to the Scythian upstart, a warning which is blithely ignored. In bithynia of northwest Asia Minor, Tamburlaine meets and subdues the mighty Bajazeth and seizes the Barbarian provinces as suitable rewards for his three generals.

His next adventure brings the conqueror to Damascus, which seems to him a likely city to besiege. It is not long before Damascus falls; and the Sultan of Egypt, Zenocrate's father, who is marching with his ally, the King of Arabia to raise the siege from the doomed city, is himself defeated and taken captive. It is at the memorable banquet which Tamburlaine gives during the siege of Damascus that the conqueror rests and plans even more daring achievements.

"I will confute those blind geographers," etc.[1]

His eye falls upon the Antarctic pole.[2] But for the time being he is content to postpone the seizure of that plum, to crown Zenocrate empress of all the splendid territories he has won thus far, and to confer a modest gift upon the future father-in-law whom he has benevolently pardoned.

"To gratify the sweet Zenocrate,
Egyptians, Moores, and men of Asia,
From Barbary unto the Westerne Indie,
Shall pay a yearly tribute to thy Syre.
And from the boundes of Affrick to the banks
of Ganges, shall his might arme extend."[3]

1. Tamburlaine, ll. 1715-1722.
2. Ibid., l. 1777.
3. Ibid., ll. 2298-2303.

So ends Part One.

Part Two presents a more complicated geographical problem, being little more than a vast - though logical - panorama of names drawn from the Theatrum Orbis Terrarum and the Turcicum Imperium. In Act I of Part Two we are transported briefly into Southeastern Europe, where we may witness the truce meeting on the banks of the Danube between Sigismond of Hungary and Orcanes of Natolia. Each finds a greater enemy than the other in mighty Tamburlaine, whose thirst for empire is in no way satisfied by his recent African conquests.

Tamburlaine, it soon appears, is on the march again. For the time being he is at "Guyrons head"[1] which Miss Seaton has found both in the Theatrum's map of Asia and in the Turcicum Imperium and which she has concluded is a possible outpost of Natolia, Orcane's kingdom. We learn that the conqueror's plan is to fire all Turkey in his formidable rush toward the armies of Orcanes and, a little later, that he has swept through Cairo and Alexandria and is headed straight for Natolia. In the words of Orcanes, all Asia and Africa are in arms with Tamburlaine.[2] A temporary stand is made at "Larissa Plaines",[3] where the three lands of Egypt, Arabia, and Syria all but meet. Here Zenocrate dies, worn out presumably with a life of gorgeous puppetry and interminable

1. Tamburlaine, l. 2342.
2. Ibid., ll. 2397; 2401.
3. Tamburlaine, l. 2574.

marches of conquest, and the town of Larissa is fired in her honor. Tamburlaine is now at the very gate of the Turkish Empire and awaits the coming of his three generals and their armies.

When they join him, we are treated to the narratives of even greater material achievements. Among his other exploits, Usumcasane has thoroughly subdued to Tamburlaine's colors the Straits of Gibraltar and the Canary Islands. Techelles has made further progress in Africa, and Theridamas has carried his master's name, wealth, and fame into Europe.

A diversion in the sweeping course of Part II's main action is created by the treachery of Sigismond. To the aid of his allies, the Kings of Soria and Jerusalem, Orcanes has dismissed the major part of his army and is now marching to Natolia to meet them. At Orminus, already well within Asia Minor, he hears of the treachery of Sigismond and turns back to meet him. No precise location is given for the battle, but we are to understand that it takes place in Natolia (not modern Anatolia, as Ethel Seaton has pointed out, but the whole promontory of Asia Minor[1]) and that Sigismond is defeated and slain.

With this engagement decided, our attention is directed once more to the enterprising armies of Tamburlaine. Techelles and Theridamas have been sent ahead of the main army of the Scythian conqueror ("Northwarde from Tamburlaine"[2])

1. Ethel Seaton, Op. Cit., p. 21.
2. Tamburlaine, l. 3350.

to fire Turkish towns. They have reached the frontier point of Soria, the dominion of one of Orcane's allies, and are laying siege to "Balsera" (which Miss Seaton locates on Ortelius's map of Natolia as "Pasera")[1] the "chiefest hold"[2]. It is not long before the garrison surrenders, as all garrisons do when they are besieged by Tamburlaine; and the two victorious generals go to rejoin their leader,

"Who by this time is at Natolia,
Ready to charge the army of the Turke."[3]

As Callapine, who has joined Orcanes and the other Turks, soon discovers, Tamburlaine is really at Aleppo and meaning to lay siege to Natolia and eventually to fire it. During the subsequent battle, Callapine escapes and all the other Turks are defeated and taken captive. Then the eternally restless Tamburlaine begins laying new plans. He is now for Babylon.

"Where Belus, Ninus, and great Alexander
Haue rode in triumph, triumphs Tamburlaine."[4]

Babylon falls like every other stronghold before his irresistible might, and Tamburlaine's mortal illness comes upon him. But he is as yet far from impotent. When Callapine, who has gathered together a strong army of Turks, thinks to besiege Tamburlaine in his temporary bivouac at Babylon, he and his army are scattered merely by the con-

1. Ethel Seaton, Op. Cit., p. 24.
2. Tamburlaine, l. 3351.
3. Ibid., ll. 3497-3498.
4. Tamburlaine, ll. 4181-4182.

queror's last terrible look. When death finally overtakes Tamburlaine, he is still in Babylon, still intellectually indomitable, still yearning for fresh acquisitions and honors. Incorrigible worldling that he is, he puts up a masterful fight against those powers

"That meane t' inuest me in a higher throane..."[1]

And, when he finds his resistance fruitless, he makes what is perhaps his last wholly characteristic gesture. He calls for a map, and still profanely wishing for those as yet unnumbered fruits of earth, reviews all his conquests and looks lovingly at the parts of the world which he has not lived long enough to subdue.

"Here I began to martch towards Persea etc."[2]

But with the burning foresight that made many another Elizabethan adventurer great he leaves all the world that remains unwon to an enterprising posterity, in this case, his sons.

With the splendid map speech the main theme of the play - that of tireless cupidity - comes to an appropriate conclusion. Its characters have matched its theme. Tamburlaine is a man full of animal vigor and earthly appetite, living among men like Bajazeth and Orcanes, with the same set of values though with less effectiveness in pursuing them. In such a society there is no room for the slowly maturing spirituality of Zenocrate or the high Christianity of Sigismond's dying moments. The important thing is man's

1. Tamburlaine, l. 4514.
2. Ibid., ll. 4519-4550.

brief hour of life and the number of material achievements and expensive sensations that can be crammed into it; the incredible thing is not, as your average Medievalist would have believed it, that man should continue to live so long in the body when the powers of the soul are forever striving.

"...t'inuest him in a higher throane...."

But that the gods should dare to challenge the right of man - magnificent, inviolable man - to an immortal fulfillment on this planet.

"Why then Casane shall we wish for ought
The world affoords in greatest noueltie,
And rest attemptlesse faint and destitute?"

The average man of the Renaissance had his share of spirituality - so I shall attempt to prove in the chapter that follows - but the central worldliness of Tamburlaine was perhaps more akin to the spirit of an age that hailed the rediscovery of man in all his mortal magnificence and all his mortal desires. His lusty preoccupation with all the limitless promise of the here and now, his doubt of the reality of a hereafter probably underlay in part the average Elizabethan's fear of death. With the Beautiful-Palpable within easy reach, small wonder if it was hard to foresee and provide for that dubious time

"Wher Death cuts off the progres of his pomp..."[1]

Of special prominence, then, in our constellation of quali-

1. Tamburlaine, l. 2320.

ties that make up the man of the Renaissance is the one that finds a representative expression in Tamburlaine - the desire for unrestricted worldly achievement.

CHAPTER IV

The Desire to Challenge the Supernatural

There is much to be said for those who would have the Renaissance and the Reformation two movements closely related as well as simultaneous. Many, of course, were the causes and manifestations of each movement that had nothing to do with the other, that were, indeed, hopelessly alienated. The careers of Edmund Spenser and John Milton, the one in the early, the other in the late Renaissance, amply illustrate how the two cultural umpulses could sometimes conflict. And why could they not conflict? Taken in essence the Reformation was a movement primarily ascetic, intellectual, metaphysical. The Renaissance primarily aesthetic, intellectual, worldly. The one sought to bring about changes of emphasis in regard to the method prescribed for man in his quest after eternal life. The other succeeded in blunting men's conviction of the frightful imminence of the last day by representing the glorious and diverse satisfaction that could be had from the rediscovery of man's central position in the universe and his right to the manifold harvests of earth--intellectual, physical, spiritual. And yet there can be little question that the same dissatisfaction with existing institutions, the same passionate desire to know more than what had been allowed by medievalepistemology lay at the incendiary heart of Renaissance and Reformation alike. And was not the man of the Reformation often and unashamedly

the man of the Renaissance? Witness the case of Martin Luther. His ninety-five theses were wind to a fire that had smoldered for over a century. Yet he was a Greek scholar, a passionate rebel against the ascetic way of life, and, last and most important of all, the champion of the individual dignity of man and his right to private decision in matters of conscience. Was not the man of the Renaissance often, in some small way at least, the man of the Reformation? Witness the case of Erasmus, the greatest of all humanists, whose systematic criticism of the Catholic Church as a system arose from motives similar to those that inspired later and more violent reforms. Witness the case of Ralegh, criticised for the daring liberality of his religious views. Witness the case of young Christopher Marlowe.

As I have indicated in my discussion of the School of Night in Chapter I, the Reformation spirit in Marlowe finds expression in a hyper-rationalism, a restless suspicion of established creeds. Marlowe differs from your ordinary man of the High Reformation in that he experienced no apparent compulsion to identify himself with a new theology. He craved only to possess a comprehensive insight into spiritual first causes, and his method was that of the intellectual not the mystic. That absorption of his in the School of Night is an external, and in some ways not wholly satisfactory, clue to the nature of his religious feelings.

What we cannot observe in any fact of his carreer, what we can observe only cautiously in his plays is the occasional taper glow of an old-world submission to an authority above that of the individual man, an occasional intense willingness to let the old spiritual order be. This conflict between the old and the new, the revealed and the proven, is the conflict of Ralegh. He it was who with a genial relentlessness could examine established theories of the soul and yet, at life's end, rest his storm-ridden head upon the comfort of revelation, with that masterpiece of resignation that is his epitaph.

Whether the Marlowe of this rare and not unlovely indecision is Marlowe the artist speaking objectively through his characters, or Marlowe speaking for himself, is neither here nor there as an issue in the present discussion. The important thing is that evidende of two broad conflicting attitudes toward religion can be followed through the plays. With the exception of The Massacre at Paris --which is less interesting for that very reason--the conflict lacks a specifically contemporary ring in that it is never more than incidentally between one system of religion and another, or between faith and scepticism. Rather it is between spiritual humility and a desire to dare the eternal. The latter mood is the one that predominates in Marlowe's plays, though, oddly enough, when we consider the reputation for intellectual daring that Marlowe enjoyed in his own day, it

is, for one reason or another, never finally victorious.

Let us look first of all at two of Marlowe's more diffident male characters. Sigismund of Hungary, one of Tamburlaine's inferior adversaries, and Edward II show an orthodox submissiveness to divine control of their destinies that is a rather rare quality in Marlowe's playmen. An admirable figure, except in the single instance in which he permits himself to be coaxed by his treacherous allies into breaking his covenant with the Mohammedan Orcanes, Sigismund meets the well-merited fall of his fortunes like the Christian gentleman he is. He confesses his guilt in betraying Orcanes and throws himself upon God's mercy.

"Discomfited is all the Christian hoste,
And God hath thundered vengeance from on high,
For my accurst and hatefull periurie.
O iust and dreadfull punisher of sinne,
Let the dishonor of the paines I feele,
In this my mortall well deserued wound,
End all my penance in my sodaine death,
And let this death wherein to sinne I die
Conceiue a second life in endlesse mercie."[1]

The final other-worldliness of Edward is not less genuine or effective because we have had previous dramatic assurance that he will soon turn over all his power to his enemies, the barons. We cannot question his sincerity when he reverts to a half-gorgotten source of comfort with a fierce,

1. Tamburlaine, ll. 2922-2930.

renewed eagerness to learn, and exclaims:

"Now sweete God of heauen,
Make me despise this transitorie pompe
And sit for aye inthronized in heauen"[1]

Unlike Tamburlaine he will study to exchange a corruptible diadem for the "sweet fruition" of a heavenly crown, for a hope of ultimate revelation and renewal. In the end he submits to the assassin's stroke with an almost fiery unconcern, that recalls the early Christians' sacrifice. He says to Lightborn:

"And let me see the stroke before it comes,
That euen then when I shall lose my life,
My minde may be more stedfast on my God."[2]

How strongly opposed are these to the sentiments of the dying Tamburlaine!

In Mortimer, junior's bowing out begins to appear that other, antithetical attitude of which I have spoken. The lofty impudence with which he professes his eagerness to explore even the innermost secrets of the terrifying "other side" is the spirit of the Ralegh of Cadiz, Elizabethanism par excellence.

"Farewell faire Queene, weepe not for Mortimer
That scornes the world, and as a traueller
Goes to discouer countries yet vnknowne."[3]

1. Edward II., ll. 2093-2095.
2. Ibid, ll. 2524-2526.
3. Ibid, ll. 2632- 2634.

A contrast, surely, to the mood in which Hamlet anticipated a similar journey!

Tamburlaine comes closer still to this prevailing mood of cosmic impertinence. He combines that curiously Renaissance lack of concern about everything beyond the here and now with an iconoclastic sneer for the forms, and often the very essence, of religious systems. This latter proclivity of Tamburlaine's calls to mind the scepticisms that motivated the School of Night, itself a liberal offshoot of the Reformation no less than of the Renaissance.

The conqueror of the threefold world shares with Mortimer and Faustus a heady conviction that man is entitled to carte blanche in the matter of meta-physical investigation as well as in profane scholarship and geography. There is certainly none of your average medievalist's air of treading on eggs that will presently hatch a papal bull in the following passage of inspired egoism:

> "Our soules, whose faculties can comprehend
> The wondrous Architecture of the world:
> And measure euery wandring planets' course,
> Still climing after knowledge infinite,
> And alwaies moouing as the restles Spheares,
> Wils vs to weare our selues and neuer rest..."[1]

1. Tamburlaine, ll. 872-877.

But there is a special brand of egoism all his own in the cavalier way in which Tamburlaine flaunts the traditional boundaries between God's world and his own sublunar one. In his view God serves a variety of purposes. Sometimes he is a very special patron favoring Tamburlaine above all other created beings, and Tamburlaine himself is one "whose very cruelties are ordered by heaven."[1] Hence, of course, the conqueror's sense of mission, which leads him to crow himself abroad as the "Scourge of God". Sometimes God appears about to raise him, Tamburlaine, to a state of eminence almost equal to his own; sometines He is the victim of Tamburlaine's vigorous threats of war and usurpation.

In the first case God is seen as a Being not merely benevolent but the jealous champion of a favorite emissary. When Bajazeth calls down heaven's curse upon his conqueror and master, Tamburlaine answers:

> "The chiefest God first moouer of that Spheare,
> Enchac'd with thousands euer shining lamps,
> Will sooner burne the glorious frame of Heauen,
> Then it should so conspire my ouerthrow."[2]

But it is soon possible to observe in Tamburlaine a disposition to consider himself just about equivalent to

1. Leslie Spence, Op Cit., p. 612.
2. Tamburlaine, ll. 1452-1455.

God the Son. Certainly his vassal, Techelles would not argue his right to such a title. He calls his leader "mighty Tambulaine, our earthly God."[1]

The next logical step is for Tamburlaine to look forward to that future time--if he is in a mood to believe in anything beyond an earthly fulfillment--when he will be raised even above his present eminence. On one such occasion he warns his son, Celebinus, to prepare to assume his father's earthlyrole of ruler and conqueror, for some successor will be needed,

"If Ioue esteeming me too good for earth,
Raise me to match the faire Aldeboran,
Aboue the three fold Astracime of heauen..."[2]

But sometimes it appears that God himself, like Cosroe, Bajazeth, and all those other once proud heads, may become another hazard in this pagan Caesar's incredible march of conquest. The God-usurping phase of Tamburlaine's plans makes its appearance in a speech displaying something moresignificant than mere hyperbolic ornament.

"Ioue viewing me in armes, lookes pale and wan,
Fearing my power should pull him from his throne,"[3]

and reaches an impressive consummation in that unreconciled death scene, which I mentioned previously as being in strik-

1. Tamburlaine, l. 2707.
2. Ibid, ll. 4039-4041.
3. Ibid, ll. 2234-2235.

ing contrast to that of Edward II. Believing that the Gods have at last conspired to undermine a power that threatens their own peace, Tamburlaine roars defiance like a maimed Samson. He struggles superbly with his waning vigor to arm again, to issue forth and meet on an immortal field this new threat to his invincible might. And he is confident that he will prevail, as he always has prevailed, even against the infinite swarming legions of the Most High.

"Come let vs march against the powers of heauen,
And set blacke streamers in the firmament.
To signifie the slaughter of the Gods .....
Come carie me to war against the Gods..."[1]

A somewhat more concrete instance of Tamburlaine's revolt is the episode in which he burns the Koran. It is then that he rejects unequivocally spirit and trappings alike of an ancient and sacred tradition. Mohammed he flouts and invites his defiance in the spirit of one

"That shakes his sword against they maiesty,
And spurns the Abstracts of they foolish lawes"[2]

For he connot see that Mohammed has been of any help to his followers in their fated efforts to check the spreading flame of a Scythian peasant's ambition. He more than rejects Mohammedanism; implicitly he rejects all other forms and substances of religion for that as yet unrevealed "God that

1. Tamburlaine, ll. 4440-4442, 4444.
2. Ibid ,ll. 4307-4308.

sits in heauen, if any God."[1] Even then, like his creator, he is "still too much of an iconoclast to hold steadily to his vision....,[2] for proof of which we need look no farther than that cynical parentheses "if any God". No, Tamburlaine would prepare to admit no second actor into his own closet drama of limitless personal power, but, if and when he does, the God-role will be sufficiently pallid to act as no very considerable check upon his own ambition.

This strutting before the face of the Almighty, this glorious want of deference for the hitherto mysterious Absolute is never fully developed in Tamburlaine. The conqueror is too busy extending his dominion over the threefold world and assimilating the lairds and stiff-necked monarchs he has already conquered. It is in Doctor Faustus that we witness the perfection of this hyper-confidence of man's spiritual nature. Simpson has pointed out how aptly Tamburlaine's recognition of the great soul's lust for "knowledge infinite" has anticipated the theme of Doctor Faustus.[3] But, aspiring as he is in other respects, Tamburlaine meddled very infrequently with ticklish problems of metaphysics. He was, indeed, a man of uncanny physical and intellectual drive; he was an Hegelian marvel born centuries before his time. But his true character was that of an earthly conqueror, and the world has seen and will see many more of his kind. But Faustus's "aching longing for the impossible"[4]- For that it must be surely called--

1. Tamburlaine, l. 4312.
2. Muriel Bradbrook, Op. Cit., p. 107.
3. Percy Simpson, Op. Cit., p. 22.
4. John Bakeless, Op. Cit., P. 129.

led him into trackless regions of the spirit world, where no man had ever ventured. Many sanguine hearts of Marlowe's age--those, for example of Marlowe himself, of Ralegh, of the whole conjuring School of Night--might have dreamed deliciously of such a defiant expedition, and it was with a jaunty twist of his blue mantle that the doomed Mortimer, junior, prepared to undertake it. But none could have attempted it through other mediums than imagination or death. In his arrogance Faustus attempted it alive and in propria persona. He was damned for his trouble, "damned by the pride of his own overweening intellect."[1]

Mephistopheles had been partly responsible for Fautus's betrayal of himself and his God in exchange for what had seemed to Faustus a complete, an almost voluptuous fulfillment of his abnormal appetite for knowledge. He had misled him with many a subtle argument, perhaps best illustrated by that alluring exaggeration of Marlowe's own hour, whichcould only have been offered by one Renaissance spirit and accepted by another.

"Thinkst thou heauen is such a glorious thing?
I tel thee tis not halfe so faire as thou
Or any man that breathes on earth."[2]

But he had twice out of the impulse of his own infinite torment-given Faustus several unconscious warnings. These

1. John Bakeless, Op. Cit., p. 135.
2. Doctor Faustus, ll. 616-618.

warnings might have been the salvation of that learned person's soul if he had not been hardened in his determination to reach even as far as the last outposts of the supernatural world. On one occasion Mephistopheles makes a sombre, implied analogy between Faustus and Lucifer, his archangelical counterpart. When Gaustus asks why Lucifer was hurled from bliss to everlasting torment, Mephistopheles replied:

"O by aspiring pride and insolence...."[1]

Later in the same colloquy he laments his own fall from joy and anticipates Satan of Paradise Lost by fixing the individual nature of damnation. Damnation is that experience whereby the soul temporarily escapes its dark element with no loss of suffering or of consciousness of guilt.

"Fau. How comes it then that thou are out of hel?

Me. Why this is hel, nor am I out of it."[2]

This gruesome philosophy finds its echo a little later in Mephistopheles's even more impressive lines:

"Hell hath no limits, nor is circumscribed

In one selfe place, for where we are is hell..."[3]

But Faustus will not be warned.

The tragic fact of his arrogance and the God-given necessity of his defeat are first emphasized by the chorus in a passage of Icarian metaphor.

1. Doctor Faustus, l. 303.
2. Ibid, ll. 311-312.
3. Ibid, ll. 553-554.

"...swolne with cunning, of a selfe conceit
His waxen wings did mount aboue his reach,
And melting heauens conspirde his ouerthrow."[1]

Thereupon we are intruduced to Faustus in his study and the impressive musings of a man crowned with every achievement of mind and spirit yet bored with all. He has combed every experience hitherto possible to the mind of man and is still aspiring, still dissatisfied. His reason for rejecting his vast medicinal lore as worthless is particularly significant.

"Wouldst thou make man to liue enternally?
Or being dead, raise them to life againe?
Then this profession were to be esteemed."[2]

The other fruits of his scholarship are discarded as equally sterile, and he turns a burning eye upon necromancy, that horrid science, which men of true religious humility had shunned as unclean, which only heretical upstarts like the members of the School of Night could study without constant fear of walking in damnation.

"O what a world of profit and delight,
Of power, of honor, of omnipotence
Is promised to the studious Artizan?
All things that mooue between the quiet poles
Shal be at my commannd, Emperors and Kings

1. Doctor Faustus, ll. 20-22.
2. Ibid, ll. 52-54.

Are but obeyd in their seuerall prouinces:
Nor can they raise the winde, or rend the cloudes:
But his dominion that exceedes in this,
Stretcheth as farre as doth the minde of man.
A sound Magician is a mighty god:
Heere Faustus trie thy braines to gaine a deitie."[1]

In that speech Faustus has found a way to achieve what Tamburlaine had only begun to dream of--the equation or near-equation of his power with the deity's. His method is to investigate and eventually to master the external machinery of that deity's mightiness. He will raise the wind and rend the clouds; he will learn to control "all things that mooue betweene the quiet poles." Miss Bradbrook has noted a link between religious speculation and Marlowe's own interest in necromancy. Faustus argues for the same link but goes even farther. For him, conjuring, dominion over the marvellous, is the very symbol of deity.

But Faustus has made his decision at a price. The superior power and insight he craves are his only if he will exchange his soul for them. Faustus hardly hesitates. He strikes his sinister bargain with Lucifer through Lucifer's agent, Mephistopheles, and from then on, as I have indicated in Chapter II, becomes the wisest, most spectacular, most powerful figure in his world. He questions his demon com-

1. Doctor Faustus, ll. 81-91.

panion brazenly on every sacred, metaphysical subject. He achieves the sacrilegious masterpiece of raising the ghosts of dead heroes and heroines for his own delight and that of his admirers. He goes personally to pry out mysteries that have never been more than partially revealed to other mortals. As Wagner says:

"Learned Faustus,
To know the secrets of Astronomy,
Grauen in the booke of Ioues hie firmament,
Did mount himselfe to scale Olympus top,
Being seated in a chariot burning bright,
Drawne by the strength of yoky dragons neckes:
He now is gone to prooue Cosmography ..."[1]

Occasionally the lessons of piety he learned in earlier days rise to haunt him, and his conscience fights briefly and beebly with its demon of ambition. The conflict is allegorized in the persons of the good and bad angels. At first, however, Faustus is too drunk with his new power to listen to the horrified counsel of the good angel.

"O Faustus, lay that damned booke aside,
And gaze not on it, lest it tempt thy soule,
And heape Gods heauy wrath vpon thy head.
Reade, reade the scriptures, that is blasphemy."[2]

1. Doctor Faustus, ll. 792-798.
2. Ibid, ll. 98-101.

He comforts himself with the image of his own superiority,

"What God can hurt thee Faustus? thou are safe...,"[1]

or the delusion of a chilly scepticism, that is not at all unlike what we would expect from Marlowe himself.

"Thinkst thou that Faustus is so fond, to imagine
That after this life there is any paine?"[2]

But presently the struggle that heaven and hell are waging for the final possession of his soul grows more intense. When at one point Mephistopheles advises him to keep thinking of the hell to which he will presently be consigned, Faustus experiences one of his brief, sharp periods of panic followed by abasement and remorse and, half to himself, he answers:

"Thinke Faustus, vpon God that made the world."[3]

But it is even then too late. For every temptation that heaven holds out to him, Lucifer, Mephistopheles, and the whole legion of devils have a more seductive one. Or Faustus himself invents pleasures to turn his sick thoughts away from the imminent fact of his destruction.

As the hour approaches when his brief period of power and pleasure will be over and Mephistopheles will come to claim him for Lucifer, the life and death struggle of his good and bad genius reaches an agonized extremity.

1. Doctor Faustus, l. 457.
2. Ibid, ll. 565-566.
3. Ibid, l. 686.

But Faustus has long since begun to experience the first penalty of sin. He despairs of forgiveness and salvation. He cannot even pray to be saved. When the three scholars urge him to call upon God, he answers wildly:

"On God whome Faustus hath abiurde, oh God, whome Faustus hath blasphemed: ah my God, I woulde weepe, but the diuel drawes in my teares. Gush foorth bloud, insteade of teares, yea life and soule. Oh he stayes my tong. I would lift vp my hands, but see, they hold the, they hold them."[1] Lucifer and his lieutenant, Mephistopheles, have sacrificed too much for this peerless soul to relinquish it so easily.

"O ile leape vp to my God: who pulles me downe?
See see where Christs blood streames in the firmament.
One drop would saue my soule, halfe a drop, ah my Christ.
Ah rend not my heart for naming of my Christ,
Yet wil I call on him: Oh spare me Lucifer!
Where is it now? tis gone: And see me where God
Stretcheth out his arme, and bends his irefull browes:
Mountaines and hilles, come, come, and fall on me,
And hide me from the heauy wrath of God."[2]

1. Doctor Faustus, ll. 1385-1390.
2. Ibid, ll. 1431-1439.

It is really hard to tell who, in those last intolerably racked and bleeding moments, is more adamantine--the outraged Christ or the outraged Lucifer. But the sharp conflict is soon over, and Lucifer's emissaries come to whirl the unregenerate Faustus away.

At last the chorus, fearing, perhaps, that the moral will be lost for being insufficiently pointed, justifies Faustus's damnation just as it had in the opening song.

"Cut is the branch that might haue growne ful
straight,
And burned is Apolloes Laurel bough,
That sometime grew within this learned man:
Faustus is gone, regard his hellish fall,
Whose fiendfull fortune may exhort the wise,
Onely to wonder at vnlawful things,
Whose deepenesse doth intise such forward wits,
To practise more than heauenly power permits."[1]

Weighed in the balance with the profane ardor of Faustus and his spiritual progenitor, Tamburlaine, the Christian submissiveness of Sigismund and Edward seems a rather thin and anomalous quality in Marlowe's male characters. On the other hand the vigorous clear-headedness with which both Tamburlaine and Faustus--but especially Faustus--

1. Doctor Faustus, ll. 1478-1485.

approached the prohibited corridors of mind and spirit is very similar to the mood that reigned at the meetings of Ralegh's outlawed group of intellectuals. With this difference--the heroes of the plays have assumed the fast, the preter-naturally brilliant dyes of all great artistic concepts, and a freedom of intellectual range more permissible on the printed page or in the semi-dream world of an Elizabethan theatre than strictly practicable in the externally orthodox London public life of the same day. And we must not permit the force of Tamburlaine's and Faustus's intellectual arrogance to be lessened by the fact of their final annihilation--an annihilation that, in Faustus's case at least, turned out to be highly moral. Marlowe was too poised a liberal not to see the values in both points of view--the orthodox and the unorthodox. Has not Miss Bradbrook rightly marvelled at the exquisite ballance in the Elizabethan mind of what would seem to us now violently opposed points of view? The scientist and the superstutious necromancer could be one and the same person. Ralegh could bring his penetrating scepticism to bear upon theories of the soul's nature and yet assume in the end a position not too far isolated from that of the Jesuit Southwell.[1] Spenser could produce the passionate opulence of a love hymn like his Epithalamion and yet be drawn to the stern asceticism of a

1. Muriel Bradbrook, Op. Cit., p. 57.

Puritan ideal. It will be understandable, then why one would wish to include in the galaxy of traits that comprise the Renaissance man this quality which Faustus represents more strikingly than any other Marlowe character--the desire to challenge the supernatural.

CHAPTER V

MACHIAVELLISM

Had Christopher Marlowe really read The Prince and The Discourses of Nicholas Machiavelli, those exemplary villains of his own creation - Mortimer, junior, the Duke de Guise, Barabas of Malta - might never have breathed. But, though he had many an Elizabethan statesman-intellectual's practical interest in the doctrines of the Florentine counselor of princes, he was, like those other Englishmen, forced to come by them second-hand and in a somewhat garbled state. At the time when Marlowe was writing, Machiavelli had not yet been done into English, and the only source of his opinions was the hostile work of a French Huguenot, named Innocent Gentillet. This sober Gentillet thought he was redeeming Christian society and, in particular, those thoughtless countrymen of his who were being corrupted by what seemed to him the scandalous expediency of Machiavelli's statecraft by publishing a long and painfully learned refutation of the most pernicious of Machiavelli's teachings. Above its proud list of sources, Gentillet's pious work has one of the longest titles in any literature; so for brevity's sake scholars have agreed to call the book by the simple and rather provocative name of Anti-Machiavel.

Innocent Gentillet was a rather mean-minded little man himself, too pious and too transparently dull ever to have made a fair commentator on the sophisticated polity of Nicholas Machiavelli. The Prince, for example, he measured

only by itself, not seeing its expediency in an age and in a nation of tyrant-usurpers; not seeing how, with those conditions admitted, it might be called the work of a superior patriot. He saw only its arbitrary moral influence on the mind of a weakling or a rogue, and outlawed it accordingly. His method of attack put the poor Florentine at an initial disadvantage from which a holier man would have difficulty recovering, for he chose to lift a number of "maximes", as he called them from their original context and jeer at them on the sole basis of contradictory statements made by other literary men. Such an eclipse of the logical method, such a naive tour de force of scholarship might be laughed at quietly as pretentious and almost as quietly dismissed, were it not also true that Gentillet is not always careful to interpret even his selected passages properly.

One or two especially notable examples of this indifference to literal truth should prove sufficiently illustrative. In his section, "Of Counsel", Gentillet has pounced mercilessly on the following principle of Machiavelli's:

"The Prince to shun and not to be circumvented of Flatterers, ought to forbid his friends and Counsellors, that they speak not to him, nor to Counsell him any thing, but only of those things whereof he freely begins to speake, or asketh their advise."[1]

1. Innocent Gentillet, Anti-Machiavel, trans. Simon Pateriche, (London: 1608), p. 30.

Gentillet's rendering of this passage is that the wise Prince will only encourage and accumulate flatterers by enforcing a speak-when-you-are-spoken-to rule among his counselors. The deduction is perhaps admissible on the face value of the "maxime". But Gentillet has forgotten an earlier, explicit counsel of Machiavelli's that one of the first things the Prince must do is to gather around him only those men whose integrity he has had occasion to prove.[1] Such men will give presumably nothing but the most sincere advice when and if it is solicited.

"Maxime 6" in the section, "Of Religion", is another convenient illustration. According to this maxim, Machiavelli has termed the Christian religion the prime fulminator of civil discord. If (to paraphrase) the Papal Chair were moved to Switzerland, it would not be long before even that peaceful country was in a state of anarchy. In his subsequent refutation Gentillet misses the entire point of the argument, which seems to me to be the obvious one, viz., that the Catholic Church and specifically its apostolic head would bring revolution to the most pacific country in the world, if transferred from their natural seat of discord - Rome. This is the argument which, if bent on refutation, the Huguenot scholar should have chosen to refute. Yet he spends his usual supernumerary pages of learned citation, proving

1. Niccolo Machiavelli, The Prince and The Discourses, Modern Library ed., (New York: date?), p. 87.

that Papal Chairs in foreign lands come to no good end anyway![1] This blithe renunciation of the central blaze of argument for any incidental twinkle is typical of the method of Innocent Gentillet.

I shall shortly attempt to indicate in just what ways Marlowe has departed from Gentillet's adaptation of Machiavelli to beget a vogue in heroes (perhaps I should say, to synthesize, as he so frequently does, certain forces of character already conspicuously active in Renaissance society), which inspired the Shakespeare of Richard III, Macbeth, and Othello and survive even into our own villain melodramas of the present day. But first I should like to evaluate those elements of Machiavellism that are patently derived from Gentillet.

There are two general concomitants of Machiavellian "policy", as interpreted by Gentillet, that have left their mark on Marlowe's heroes. One is the philosophy of cruelty, which is perhaps best articulated in "Maxime 7" of the section on "policy". In this maxim the Prince is advised to pattern his conduct on that of Caesar Borgia - a piece of advice that carries its own organic light, for Gorgia, one of the most courageous and canny of statesmen, is also well known as one of the cruelest cut-throats and despots of Renaissance Italy. The other is the famous doctrine of dissimulation, which finds apt expression in the eighteenth

1. Innocent Gentillet, Op. Cit., p. 123 ff.

maxim, also in the section on "policy". A Prince, according to this maxim, ought not be afraid to perjure himself and dissemble if thereby he may attain some justifiable end.

"True it is, in this art of tromperie and deceit, men must needs use great fainednesse, dissimulations, and periuries..."[1]

But some changes were bound to take place when the dry statecraft of Machiavelli met the heated dramatist's gift of Christopher Marlowe. Out of a philosophy of statesmanship emerged a whole philosophy of character, heedless, grim, full of sable "tromperie".

"Machiavelli had applied his cynicism to affairs of state; Marlowe applied it to personal life. Machiavelli did not necessarily oppose the special conception of power which he called "virtu" to ordinary moral virtue; Marlowe did."[2]

Between them Bakeless and Spence have derived a pretty serviceable recipe for Marlowe's Machiavellism. It consists, says Spence, in "cunning calculation, ingratitude, the sureness of stroke by merit of which the adversary has no chance, and thoroughness in exterminating all who might question the conqueror's title."[3] Bakeless's interpretation has a supplementary interest. He sees the poet's Machiavellism principally through the person of Barabas.

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1. Innocent Gentillet, Op. Cit., p. 247.
2. John Bakeless, Op. Cit., p. 184.
3. Leslie Spence, Op. Cit., p. 616-617.

"From Gentillet's perversion... Barabas gets his eagerness for revenge, his contempt of religion as self-seeking hypocrisy, his idea that he is bound to keep faith only when profitable, and his complete egoism."[1]
In synthesis these two good definitions form a single admirable one, to which, nevertheless, I am tempted to add one more ingredient or rather a particularization of ingredients already suggested by Spence and Bakeless. That one is "cruelty", Italianate cruelty of the sort a Borgia wouldde-vise - now lurid and bloodthirsty, now subtle and noxious, creeping on a man unawares. Such cruelty has been implicitly recommended by "Maxime 7" of "Policy", which I mentioned earlier.

How, one wonders next, does Marlowe come by this somewhat gruesome philosophy, which, according to Bakeless, infected all his greatest characters?[2] According to Spence's interpretation it would seem that the times are generally out of sympathy with Machiavellian doctrine. Every Renaissance gentleman who sets the highest possible value upon his re-discovered ego is drinking in the graceful Platonism of Il Cortegiano and adapting his life to it.

"Sidney and Spenser reflect the chivalrous element that was still strong in English society, the high principle of honour, the elevation of sentiment, the sense of duty and religion. From all these restraining principles in the con-

1. John Bakeless, Op. Cit., p. 184.
2. John Bakeless, Op. Cit., p. 5.

science of the nation Marlowe cut himself off..."[1]

But there are other interpretations - Bakeless's, for instance, which is perhaps better because it strikes both the personal and contemporary note.

"It was natural for him to turn to Machiavellian "pollicie", in view of his overmastering ambition and the successful knavery that he saw about him..."[2]
Bakeless has apparently not forgotten the Poleys of Elizabethan society, the Raleghs who could write in praise of the well-rounded man of Castiglione's conception[3] and yet be deemed with Marlowe "mischievous Machivels",[4] the notorious Borgias of the continental Renaissance. It is Marlowe's greater kinship with the continental world of sometimes virulent selfishness that Frederick Boas had in mind when he called Marlowe the most Italianate of Renaissance Englishmen; it is the fact that there were other such men among his compatriots to which Max Lerner pays tribute when he speaks of the alternate repulsion and sympathy that existed between a Tudor mind and that of a contemporary Italian.[5] It is but another proof of the existence of the Renaissance paradox that the serene idealism of a Castiglione and the embattled realism of a Machiavelli could coexist - and without too marked a conflict - in the same intellectual climate.

With these preliminary considerations in mind I

1. Leslie Spence, Op. Cit., p. 616.
2. John Bakeless, Op. Cit., p. 7.
3. "Christopher Hare", Courts and Camps of the Italian Renaissance, (New York 1908), p. 204.
4. Bradbrook, Op. Cit., p. 38.
5. Niccolo Machiavelli, Op. Cit., p. xxxix.

shall now proceed to an analysis of the quality of Machiavellism in Marlowe's playmen, resorting, according to my custom, to the method of climax rather than of chronology. I begin with Tamburlaine, a play whose Machiavellian content - and I shall hereafter use "Machiavellism" in the sense of the composite definition given above - has never been fully appreciated.

It would be possible to accumulate indefinitely examples of typically Machiavellian bloodthirstiness from the first of Marlowe's great plays. But such a policy would be monotonous for this reason: at the time he was writing Tamburlaine Marlowe had begun to manipulate little more than the purely sadistic aspects of his revised Machiavellism. Dramatically he had not yet reached a realization of the Protean suppleness, the grim enchantment that cunning gives cruelty and that made the Guise and Barabas so inexhaustibly significant to the Elizabethan imagination. That fact is, of course, a partial explanation of the unrelieved goriness-which modern readers find so irritating - of much of Tamburlaine.

Not from the conqueror alone must we expect the cheerful capacity of the Machiavel to hear people scream with pain, and yet exult or merely remain absorbed in the dust on his doublet. Very early in the play, Mycetes, the first of the two Persian Kings whom Tamburlaine brings to their knees, says gloatingly to Theridamas, whom he hopes to see return victorious over Tamburlaine:

"I long to see thee backe returne from thence,
That I may view these milk-white steeds of mine,
All loden with the heads of killed men.
And from their knees euen to their hoofes below
Besmer'd with blood, that makes a dainty show."[1]

Marlowe's tendency in his Machiavellian moments to carry ruthlessness to an almost comic extreme - a tendency which I mentioned earlier in a reference to Barabas O has even now begun to appear.

Bajazeth has perhaps greater reason than Mycetes to long to witness the vivisection of Tamburlaine. His gruesome outburst of ll. 1995 ff. is doubly and effectively darkened by the sort of energetic spleen one finds in a desperate man.

"Go, neuer to returne with victorie:
Millions of men encompasse thee about,
And gore thy body with as many wounds.
Sharpe forked arrowes light vpon thy horse:
Furies from the blacke Cocitus lake,
Breake vp the earth, and with their firebrands,
Enforce thee run vpon the banefull pikes.
Volleyes of shot pierce through thy charmed Skin,
And euery bullet dipt in poison drugs,
Or roaring Cannons seuer all thy ioints,
Making thee mount as high as Eagles soar."[2]

1. Tamburlaine, ll. 84-88.
2. Tamburlaine, ll. 199 5-2005.

Sometimes, however, this paganism, strangely alloyed as it is with Italianate sadism, reaches what seems to be an almost gratuitous coarseness. So it does in the famous passage elucidated by Ethel Seaton, in which Orcanes makes the Danube debouch into the Mediterranean.

But it is not Mycetes, or Bajazeth, or Orcanes, but Tamburlaine whom we would expect to set the pace of Machiavellian ferocity in this early play of Marlowe's and Tamburlaine does not disappoint us.

"But since I exercise a greater name,
The Scourge of God and Terrour of the world,
I must apply myselfe to fit those termes,
In war, in blood, in death, in crueltie,
And plague such Besantes as resist in me
The power of heauens eternall maiesty."[1]

In a similar spirit - that of cruelty unrelieved by invention - is Edward II's childish and neurotic response to the Bishop of Canterbury's suggestion that Gaveston, the King's minion, be banished from England.

"Proud Rome, that hatchest such imperiall groomes,
For these thy superstitious taperlights,
Wherewith thy antichristian churches blaze,
Ile fire thy crased buildings, and enforce
The papall towers to kisse the Lowlie ground,
With slaughtered priests make Tibers channell swell,
And bankes raisd higher with their sepulchers..."[2]

1. Tamburlaine, ll. 3827-3832.
2. Edward II, ll. 393-399.

But with the introduction of those two arch-rogues, Spencer and Baldock, enter other and more intriguing omens of Marlowe's Machiavellism - cunning and "tromperie". Both men agree to use Spencer's power over Gaveston, the King's now banished favorite, who expects shortly to return, as a means of ingratiating themselves at court. Following this covenant, Spencer gives Baldock some shrewd advice, the last lines of which are as fine a specimen as one will find in Marlowe of the poet's tendency to pervert much that Castiglione stood for into first-rate Machiavellism.

"Then Balduck, you must cast the scholler off,
And learne to court it like a Gentleman,
Tis not a black coate and a little band,
A Veluet cap'de cloake, fac'st before with Serge,
And smelling to a Nosegay all the day,
Or holding of a napkin in your hand,
Or saying a long grace at a tables end,
Or making lowe legs to a noble man,
Or looking downeward with your eye lids close,
And saying trulie ant may please your honour,
Can get you any favour with great men,
You must be proud, bold, pleasant, resolute,
And now and then, stab as occasion serues."[1]

And Baldock's answer is wholly in the grimly subtle spirit of the Italian courtier battling for ascendancy in a jealous

1. Edward II. ll. 751-763.

community of high-born cut-throats.

"Spencer, thou knowest I hate such formal toies,
And vse them but of meere hypocrisie...
Though inwardly licentious enough,
And apt for any kinde of villanie."[1]

Already in Edward II we get, in the person of Mortimer Junior, the flash and smoke of that consummate villainy that will adjust to a steady flame in The Jew of Malta. Mortimer Junior, is one of the greatest puzzles of the English drama. Introduced as a clear-eyed, forthright, and rather personable young man, the spiritual progenitor of Hotspur,[2] he degenerates about halfway through the play into a most finished rogue and plotter in the high Machiavellian tradition. Justly resentful of the high-handed way in which Edward, the minion-dominated, is riding the barons and the realm to moral and financial ruin, Mortimer Junior, in company with the other barons, appears before his sovereign. That scene does much to keynote his character for the first half of the play at least. When Edmund, the King's brother, advises Edward to have the barons' heads for refusing so stubbornly to accept Gaveston, the more prudent Warwick decides to hold his tongue and counsels the fiery Mortimer to do the same. But Mortimer is too honest for that. His answer is typical of him.

1. Edward II, ll. 764-765; ll. 770-771.
2. William D. Briggs, "Introduction," Marlowe's Edward II, (London: 1904), p. cvii.

"I cannot, nor I will not, I must speake..."[1]

From line 561, however, the first inkling of change is apparent. Prevailed on by the queen, whom he loves, to ask the other barons to recall Gaveston, he gives his friends a sophistical-seeming reason for his change of heart. But after some resistance the other barons finally agree to his suggestion. That reason has an interest other than that it serves to illustrate the preliminary stage in a fascinating but inexplicable breakdown of character. It also throws some stunning light on one aspect of Machiavellian chicanery.

"But were he here, detested as he is,
How easilie might some base slaue be subbornd
To greet his lordship with a poiniard,
And none so much as blame the murtherer,
But rather praise him for that braue attempt,
And in the Chronicle, enrowle his name,
For purging of the realme of such a plague."[2]

It is not so very long afterwards that we find in Mortimer junior a full-grown representative of the Machiavellian maxim which says:

"For, to dominier and reigne there is no honestie or vertue that can keepe in the ambition of men."[3]

By means of a letter, in which some directions in Latin are made equivocal by the omission of a comma, he plans to have

1. Edward II, l. 122.
2. Ibid., ll. 561-567.
3. Innocent Gentillet, Op. Cit., p. 31.

the king - now captive to the barons - murdered. The letter is given to Lightborn, a professional murderer, and upon his departure Mortimer indulges in one of those self-searching Elizabethan soliloquies in which the bent of men's minds is revealed more conveniently and quickly than it could be in whole pages of action.

"The prince I rule, the queene do I commaund,
And with a lowly conge to the ground,
The proudest lords salute me as I pass,
I seale, I cancell, I do what I will,
Feard am I more than lou'd, let me be feard,
And when I frowne, make all the court looke pale,
I view the prince with Aristorchus eyes,
Whose lookes were as a breaching to a boye.
They thrust vpon me the Protectorship,
And sue to me for that which I desire,
While at the councell table, graue enough,
And not unlike a bashfull puretaine,
First I complaine of imbecilitie,
Saying it is, onus quam gravissimum,
Till being interrupted by my friends,
Suscepi that prouinciam as they terme it,
And to conclude, I am Protector now,
Now is all sure, the Queene and Mortimer
Shall rule the realme, the King, and none rule vs,
Mine enemies will I plague, my friends aduance,

And what I list commaund, who dare controwle?"[1]

Here are subtlety and ambition of a sort that sweep lives and principles before them; here is devotion to a policy of unfair preferment - all breathing of Machiavellism *par excellence*.

But *Edward II* comes even closer than this to the letter of Gentillet. Consider "Maxime 34" in the section, "Of Policy", which affirms:

> "A prince which will exercise some cruell and rigorous act... he ought to give the commission thereof unto some other to the end he may not acquire evill will and enmitie by it. And yet if he feare that such a delegation cannot be wholly exempted from blame, (to have consented to the execution which was made by his commissarie) he may cause the commissarie to bee slaine, to shew that he consented not to his crueltie, as did Cesar Borgia and Messire Remiro Dorco."[2]

Toward the end of the play Mortimer follows this gruesome advice literally. First he engages Lightborn, that most exemplary of Italianate scoundrels, to do the job of regicide for him. Lightborn is in possession of all the black arts that proved profitable to Barabas and later to the villainous Claudius of *Hamlet*.

> "...Tis not the first time I haue killed a man,
> I learnde in Naples how to poison flowers,

1. *Edward II*, ll. 2379-2399.
2. Innocent Gentillet, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 349-350.

To strangle with a lawne thrust through the throte,
To pierce the wind-pipe with a needles point,
Or whilst one is a sleepe, to take a quill
And blowe a little powder in his eares,
Or open his mouth, and pore quick silver downe..."[1]

To him Mortimer gives the equivocal letter, which he must deliver to those tools, Matrevis and Gurney. These two will bear the blame of the king's murder if any is to be borne. Finally, by means of a token on the murderer's person, Mortimer plans to make it clear to Matrevis and Gurney that Lightborn, the murderer and only other witness to the conspiracy, will himself be despatched. Caesar Borgia, whom Machiavelli praises so highly, could not have done a sprightlier job.

Gentillet has, however, promised a fitting end to all such Machiavellian schemers, an end at which Mortimer, no less than the Guise and Barabas, does not fail to arrive.

> "And truely, it is most often seene, that such subtlilties as taste of trecherie and disloyaltie succeed not well: For as Captaine Quintus said to the Aetolians: Subtile and audacious counsels are at the first very agreeable and pleasant, but to guide they are difficult and hard, and full of sorrow in the end."[2]

1. Edward II, ll. 2362-2368.
2. Innocent Gentillet, Op. Cit., p. 224.

With the exception of the unrivaled Barabas, the Duke de Guise, who throughout The Massacre at Paris threatens every Huguenot heart in France, is the most sinister of Marlowe's Machiavellian villains. That sublime egoism, which Bakeless makes a primary characteristic of the Machiavellian menace, is early asserted by the Guise.

"What glory is there in a common good,
That hanges for euery peasant to atchiue?
That like I best that flyes beyond my reach.
Set me to scale the high peramides,
And thereon set the Diadem of Fraunce,
Ile either rend it with my nayles to naught,
Or mount the top with my aspiring winges,
Although my downfall be the deepest hell."[1]

And in the lines immediately following the Guise arrogates to himself two other assets of a sufficient Machiavel - cruelty and schemery.

"For this, this head, this heart, this hand and sworde,
Contriues, imagines and fully executes
Matters of importe, aimde at by many,
Yet vnderstoode by none."[2]

The last words of this passage contain a hint of the fell secrecy in which the expert Machiavel usually likes to operate. Then a few lines, and we have the Guise's cynical admission

1. The Massacre of Paris, ll. 97-104.
2. Ibid., ll. 109-112.

that his seeming religious zeal is no more that "policy" (that term which, with the possible exception of "dissemble", occurs most frequently in the Machiavellian hero's vocabulary) to conceal a typically Marlovian lust for

"That perfect blisse and sole felicitie
The sweet fruition of an earthly Crowne."

Thus hypocrisy assumes a place in the Guise's configuration of Machiavellian qualities and is justified by a passage in "Of Policy", in which Machiavelli finds faith, clemency, and liberality, "damageable" to a prince except such of them as he can put on.[1] Finally the Guise displays vindictiveness, that everlasting capacity to hold it in for the other fellow which is included in our recipe for Machiavellism. He gleefully cites the numerous powerful figures in the Catholic world who are lined up on his side and concludes with a lurid warning for those who dislike and oppose him.

"As Caesar to his Souldiers, so say I:
Those that hate me will I learn to loath."[2]

Previously, however, to the complete personal apology he formulates in the foregoing lines he had taken the first steps in his calculated program of ambitious villainry. Catherine, the Queen Mother of France, who is mentioned by Guise in the soliloquy as one of his allies has already played into his hands by arranging a marriage between her daughter, Margaret, and the Protestant King of

1. Innocent Gentillet, Op. Cit., p. 275.
2. The Massacre at Paris, ll. 156-157.

Navarre. The Duke greets the occasion with all the approved sinister claptrap, to which Tamburlaine and Edward II have already introduced us.

"If euer Hymen lowr'd at marriage rites,
And had his alters deckt with duskie lightes:
If euer Sunne stainde heauen with bloody clowdes,
And made it look with terrour on the worlde:
If euer day were turnde to ugly night,
And night made semblance of the hue of hell,
This day, this houre, this fatall night
Shall fully shew the furn of them all."[1]

He gets off to a suitable start by haling in an apothecary, whom he greets with a query that would move a sophisticated present-day audience to laughter but that doubtless provoked many a sympathetic shiver from the Elizabethan pit.

"Where are those perfumed gloues which I sent
To be poysoned, hast thou done them?...."[2]

The apothecary has. After he has received his instructions to present them to the Queen of Navarre, Guise calls in a soldier, for whom a tender mission has also been prepared.

"Now come thou forth and play thy tragick part,
Stand in some window opening nere the street,
And when thou seest the Admirall ride by,

1. The Massacre at Paris, ll. 58ø65.
2. Ibid., ll. 70-71.

Discharge thy musket and perfourme his death:..."[1]

The first part of his sanguinary plan miscarries. The apothecary misunderstands Guise and gives the gloves to the old Queen of Navarre, while the Lord High Admiral escapes with only a minor wound. But the wholesale massacre of the Protestants in Paris comes off more successfully, and the Admiral is finally despatched with countless others the Guise has "learned to loath". The cold-blooded knavery of the pogrom proper is no more effective than the spirit of subdued viciousness in which the Guise prepares for it.

"And then the watchword being giuen, a bell shall ring,
Which when they heare, they shall begin to kill,
And neuer cease untill that bell shall cease,
Then breath awhile."[2]

The massacre is unquestionably Guise's masterpiece of cruelty, in comparison with which Mortimer's depradations, though more spell-binding in their concentrated artistry, lack scope. But Guise's activities do not end there. Charles, King of France in the play's opening scenes, is done away with because he conflicts with the equal ambitions of the Queen Mother and the Guise, whose hope of succession we have already seen. Henry of Anjou, who in the massacre had assumed a role as bloody as and certainly more discreet than that of the Guise, is, through the old Queen's "policy", given the crown. Minion-

1. The Massacre at Paris, ll. 85-88.
2. Ibid., ll. 242-245.

collector that he is, Henry is nevertheless shrewd enough to see a very real threat to his power in the Guise's sudden accumulation of troops, which the latter claims he means to use against their common enemies the Huguenots. On Henry's angry assertion that the soldiers shall be dismissed or the Guise cried as a traitor through all France, the Duke falls back on the eternal Machiavellian resource of supple "tromperie" with the cool aside:

"The choyce is hard, I must dissemble."[1]

He thereupon promises glibly to dismiss his army, though Epernoun, the King's minion, is not deceived.

"...trust him not my Lord..."[2]

But preceding no less than subsequent actions of his have marked Henry as hardly less the Machiavel than his spectacular cousin. I have spoken of the role which, as Duke of Anjou, he undertook to play in the Massacre; the posthumous punishment he devises for the Admirall is quite as merciless as anything the Guise himself could have conceived. A pleasant ceremony of stamping on the corpse, devised by Guise himself, precedes Anjou's counsel to the soldiers.

"Away with him, cut of his head and handes,
And send them for a present to the Pope:
And when this iust reuenge is finished,
Vnto mount Faucon will we dragge his coarse:

1. The Massacre at Paris, l. 872.
2. Ibid. ll. 878.

And he that liuing hated so the crosse,
Shall being dead, be hangd thereon in chaines."[1]

In the contest of dissimulation, in the smilers' conspiracy which he finally wages with his cousin for the supremacy in France, he proves himself as adept at the conscienceless subterfuge at his earlier exploits would indicate. An interview with the Guise follows immediately upon Henry's engagement of three murderers to do away with the Guise, and that interview is a veritable jewel of tromperie in the approved Machiavellian manner. Cordial-seeming, yet privately intending each other's ruin, these two plotters enjoy a last meeting, in which they pursue the following dialogue:

"Guise. Good morrow to your Maiestie.
King. Good morrow to my louing Cousin of Guise
How fares it this morning with your excellence?
Guise. I heard your Maiestie was scarsely pleasde,
That in the Court I bare so great a traine.
King. They were to blame that said I was displeasde,
And you good Cosin to imagine it.
Twere hard with me if I should doubt my kinne,
Or be suspicious of my deerest freends:
Cousin, assure you I am resolute,
Whatsoeuer any whisper in mine eares,
Not to suspect disloyaltye in thee,
And so sweet Cuz farwell."[2]

1. The Massacre at Paris, ll. 320-325.
2. Ibid, ll. 971-983.

Even after he has seen his cousin dispatched and before the friar engaged by Guise has given the King himself a fatal wound, Henry's blood lust is not quite satisfied. Before it can be, Guise's brothers, the Duke Dumaine and the Cardinal of Lorraine, must be persuaded after the same fashion of the Continental Renaissance not to avenge him. So Henry says to Epernoun:

"Goe to the Gouernour of Orleance,
And will him in my name to kill the Duke.
Get you away and strangle the Cardinall."[1]

Hair-raising confections as the Guise and Henry of Anjou were meant to be, they must give way to Marlowe's acknowledged masterpiece of villainy, Barabas of The Jew of Malta. He it is whom Machiavelli claims for his very own. The reality of Barabas's special dedication to the dark arts is put beyond question by The Jew's prologue, which is spoken by - of all persons!-"Macheuil" himself - a new "Macheuil", a "Macheuil" in Gentillet's and Marlowe's combined persons.

The opening lines of the prologue reassure us that no one can be accused of reading Machiavellism into the Guise.

"Albeit the worlde thinke Macheuill is dead,
Yet was his soule but flowne beyond the Alpes,
And now the Guize is dead is come from France
To view this Land, and frolicke with his friends."[2]

1. The Massacre at Paris, ll. 1069-1071.
2. The Jew of Malta, ll. 1-4.

A key to the nature and extent of Machiavelli's influence in England as well as in Italy is given in the lines immediately following.

"To some perhaps my name is odious,
But such as loue me, gard me from their tongues,
And let them know that I am Macheuill,
And weigh not men, and therefore not mens words:
Admir'd I am of those that hate me most.
Though some speake openly against my bookes,
Yet will they reade me, and there by attaine
To Peters Chayre: And when they case me off,
Are poyson'd by my climing followers."

The remainder of the prologue is of a special significance in that it adumbrates the principal elements in Marlowe's philosophy of Machiavellism. First the Florentine wise man makes an open avowal he has renounced sanctity and substituted for it the infinitely more rewarding virtues of knowledge and cunning.

"I count Religion but a childish Toy,
And hold there is no sinne but Ignorance,"

The special privilege of the gifted Machiavel to employ murder and usurpation toward the achievement of his ends is next asserted.

"Birds of the Aire will tell of murders past;
I am asham'd to heare such fooleries:
Many will talke of Title to a Crowne.
What right had Caesar to the Empire?

Might first made Kings, and Lawes were then most
sure,
When like the Dracos they were writ in blood."

The prologue ends with the proud publication of the fact that Machiavelli has a special proprietary feeling about Barabas and of the qualities in Barabas that entitle him to that exquisite preference.

"...I come not, I,
To reade a lecture here in Britaine,
But to present the tragedy of a Iew,
Who smiles to see how full his bags are cramb'd,
Which monie was not got without my meanes.
I craue but this, Grace him as he deserues,
And let him not be entertain'd the worse
Because he fauours me."[1]

Barabas's course of cunning is, like the Guise's introduced by one of those splendidly egoistical soliloquies at which Marlowe excels. This unfortunate Jew of Malta, who has lived in comparative honesty and quiet so long as no one appeared to cozen him out of his phenomenal wealth, now finds himself bereft of most of his property by the dispassionate Governor of Malta. The latter has chosen the Jews of his island - members as they are of an inconsiderable race - to pay the exorbitant Turkish tribute. Now Barabas, relieved of most of his hoard, has determined to bear an unresigned heart under his racial pose of humility.

1. The Jew of Malta, ll. 5-13; ll. 14-15; ll. 16-21; ll. 28-35.

"No, Barabas is borne to better chance,
And fram'd of finer mould than common men,
That measure nought but by the present time.
A reaching thought will search his deepest wits,
And cast with cunning for the time to come:..."[1]

This wholly satisfactory first look at a nature, at once haughty and warped, subtle and far-sighted, has been more or less anticipated in an earlier speech, which recalls a sneering declaration of "Macheuil" himself,

"I count Religion but a childish Toy,
And hold there is no sinne but Ignorance,"

For Barabas has said in an early denunciation of Christians and Christianity as the very fathers of hypocrisy,

"Happily some haplesse man hath conscience,
And for his conscience liues in beggery."[2]

It is not long before he proves himself to be more cold-blooded than his persecutors, more crafty than the Guise. His house has been seized by the Maltese and turned into a nunnery. But Barabas knows that some gold still lies concealed there, waiting just such a time as this. He has a lovely daughter, Abigail, whom he loves as thoroughly as the later and greater Shylock loved his Jessica. Abigail will, according to her father's plan, beg admission to the nunnery and at a favorable hour secretly take the gold from its hiding place and restore it to her father. In the

1. The Iew of Malta, ll. 452-456.
2. Ibid., ll. 157-158.

conspirators' colloquy that ensues between these two, Barabas recommends to his innocent daughter some of the more intricate shifts of Machiavellism. She must, for instance, have no fear of dissimulation and cunning, but especially she must put on the cap of piety, even as did the Guise.

"....for Religion
Hides many mischiefes from suspition."[1]

But this salvaging of a little gold is far too obscure and limited a vengeance to suit one of Barabas's cruelly outraged habits of life. He introduces an elaborate plot, of which Lodowick, the rapacious Governor's son, is to be the victim. His plan is promoted from the very beginning by the fact that Lodowick is somewhat dishonorably interested in Abigail. In an extraordinary street encounter, whose vicious double-entendre recalls the last inverview between Guise and his cousin but far surpasses it in bitterness, Lodowick attempts to ingratiate himself with Barabas. The Jew on his part invites the Governor's son to his house, intending something more than hospitality. The dialogue is carried by a series of brilliant plays on the word "jewel" (each interlocutor willfully understands something different by it) while Barabas's rabid asides, of which the following blessing for Lodowick is a fair example, soon leave no doubt about his feelings.

"I hathd poyson of the City for him,

1. The Jew of Malta, ll. 519-520.

And the white leprosie."[1]

When, immediately after, the Jew purchases Ithamore, the Turk, at a slave mart, it is for something beside tranquil domestic service.

"....for this is he
That by my helpe shall doe much villainie."[2]

And it is not long after that he is distilling for the benefit of this Turkish slave some of the more valuable principles of his own philosophy.

"First be thou voyd of these affections,
Compassion, loue, vaine hope, and hartlesse feare,
Be mou'd at nothing, see thou pitty none,
But to thy selfe smile when the Christians moane."[3]

But Ithamore is already far in advance of the stage where he requires spoon feeding. After Barabas has outlined certain past villainies of his own, Ithamore proves able to give him stroke for stroke. Barabas says:

"As for my selfe, I walke abroad a nights,
And kill sicke people groaning under walls:
Sometimes I goe about and posyon welles;
And now and then to cherish Christian thieves,
I am content to lose some of my Crownes;
That I may, walking in my Gallery,
See'em goe pinion'd along by my doore."

1. The Iew of Malta, ll. 815-816.
2. Ibid., ll. 897-898.
3. Ibid., ll. 934-937.

He got his first training at the source of all Machiavellian knavery.

"Being young, I studied physicke and began
To practise first vpon the Italian;
There I enrich'd the Priests with burials,
And alwayes kept the Secton's armes in ure
With digging graues and ringing dead men's knells:"

Afterwards

"....was I an Engineere,
And in the warres 'twixt France and Germanie
Vnder pretence of helping Charles the fifth,
Slew friend and enemy with my strategems.
Then after that was I an vsurer,
And with extorting, cozening, forfeiting,
And tricks belonging vnto Brokery,
I fill'd the Iales with Bankrouts in a Yeare,
And with young Orphans planted Hospitals,
And euery moone made some or other mad,
And now and then one hang him selfe for griefe.."[1]

But Ithamore has been employed:

"Faith, Master
In setting Christian villages on fire,
Chaining of Eunuches, binding galley-slaues.
One time I was an Hostler in an Inne,
And in the night time secretly would I steale

1. The Jew of Malta, ll. 939-945; ll. 946-950; ll. 951-961.

To trauellers Chambers, and there cut their throats,
Once at Ierusalem, where the pilgrims kneel'd,
I strowed a powder on the Marble stones,
And therewithall their knees would ranckle so,
That I haue laugh'd agood to see the cripples
Goe limping home to Christendome on stilts."[1]

It is at this point approximately that Bakeless notices the beginnings of a largely unmotivated change in Barabas, a breakdown of personality similar to the one we have already observed in the case of Mortimer.

"The character of a man who is vindictive with good reason changes; and he becomes the least credible of theatrical villains, indulging in miscellaneous iniquities merely to cause shudders in the pit."[2]

The justice of the allegation is seen in Barabas's successful effort to involve the attractive Don Mathias, Abigail's true lover, in the destruction planned for Lodowick. With Ithamore as his agent he sets the two rivals at each others' throats; a street quarrel ensues, and both young men are mortally wounded. Thus Barabas has implicated an innocent well-wisher in his revenge and broken his daughter's heart, while Ithamore's only reaction to the triple tragedy is the gleeful admiration of the typical Machiavel at an ingenious piece of cruelty brought to a successful fulfillment.

1. The Jew of Malta, ll. 967-977.
2. John Bakeless, Op. Cit., p. 175.

"Why, was there euer seene such villainy.
So neatly plotted, and so well perform'd?
Both held in hand, and flatly both beguil'd?"[1]

From that point onward Barabas loses all sense of proportion, and his "miscellaneous iniquities" become more and more gratuitous. He determines to murder his daughter, who in sorrow for Mathias's death has immured herself in a Christian convent and thereby, in the Jew's view, betrayed her race. Barabas's fondness for poison as the cleanest and quietest means of despatching human souls reminds one of nothing so much as the well-documented treachery of the Borgias.

"It is a precious powder that I bought
Of an Italian in Ancona once,
Whose operation is to binde, infect
And poyson deeply: yet not appear
In forty houres after it is tane."[2]

Barabas's plotting is once again successful, and he proceeds to even more exquisite triumphs. When two friars come to accuse him of the murder of the two rivals, Lodowick and Mathias, which Abigail has revealed on her death-bed and of the murder by poison of Abigail and every nun in the convent, Barabas temporizes in a manner that now seems wholly characteristic.

1. The Jew of Malta, ll. 1220-1222.
2. Ibid., ll. 1371-1375.

"She has confest, and we are both vndone;
My bosome intimates but I must dissemble."[1]

He pretends that he earnestly wishes to be converted and to endow some one of the two houses which the friars represent with all the wealth he has. Each man of God thereupon contends with the other as to who will seize this prize, and the original intention of bringing Barabas before the authorities to answer for his piled-up iniquities is wholly forgotten in the scramble. Friar Bernardino is first invited into Barabas's house, and the Jew lays a scheme whereby he and Ithamore will murder Bernardino and so contrive the evidence that it will appear that Friar Jacomo is the guilty one.

With the two friars safely disposed of Barabas next proceeds to have his revenge on Ithamore, who is wantoning it with the courtesan, Bellamira, and blackmailing his master for all he can get. But Barabas cannot seem to do things by halves, and the courtesan and her man Pilia Borza are brought low with Ithamore. The ingenious means this time is poison flowers.

Barabas now sees retribution stalking him. Everybody suspects him of one thing or another, and the Governor seems likely to become one of the hue and cry. So the Jew finds it convenient to feign death and permit himself to be thrown over the walls as a most undesirable corpse. But with

1. The Jew of Malta, ll. 1555-1556.

the tireless resourcefulness that he possesses he soon turns his predicament into advantage.

Calymath, the Turk, is planning to besiege Malta, and Barabas offers his services in a manner of a piece with the superb knavery we have already seen.

"For by my means Calymath shall enter in.
Ile help to slay their children and their wiues,
To fire the Churches, pull their houses down.
Take my goods too and seize vpon my lands:
I hope to see the gouernour a slaue,
And, rowing in a Gally, whipt to death."[1]

The fifth column activities by which Barabas hopes to turn the city over to the Turk are successful, and Calymath out of gratitude makes him Governor of Malta. In Barabas's own self-congratulatory idiom:

"Thus hast thou gotten, by thy policie,
No simple place, no small authority..."[2]

But, like the Guise's, his appetite for villainy is boundless. In the manner of the Italian Prince to whom Machiavelli addresses his precepts, the Jew has usurped his power and must maintain it in the only way possible.

"And since by wrong thou got'st Authority,
Maintaine it brauely by firme policy..."[3]

He will use his new eminence to reach the only sort of "earthly

1. The Jew of Malta, ll. 2065-2070.
2. Ibid., ll. 2128-2129.
3. Ibid., ll. 2136-2137.

crowne" in which he has ever set any value.

"For he that liueth in Authority,
And neither gets him friends, nor fill his bags,
Liues like the Asse that Aesope speaketh of..."[1]

The character of his "policy" has already been immortalized in the success of previous exploits. He will play the Governor and Calymath against each other as he did in the case of Lodowick and Mathias, of Bernardino and Jacomo.

"Thus loving neither, will I liue with both,
Making a profit of my policie;
And he from whom my most aduantage comes,
Shall be my friend."[2]

He enters into a specious league with his old enemy, the Governor, and exposes to him the plan he himself has for the destruction of Calymath. The latter will be invited to Barabas's house for banqueting; at the crucial moment the Governor will cut a cable, precipitating Calymath and all his entourage into a burning caldron and setting off a charge of ordnance under the Turkish army, which will be feasting in a neighboring monastery.

"Now tell me, worldlings, underneath the sunne,
If greater falshood euer has bin done."[3]

But, as Gentillet predicted, Barabas has fulminated one scheme too many. The Governor turns upon him, and the death arranged for the Turk is given to the Jew. The play

1. The Jew of Malta, ll. 2139-2141.
2. Ibid., ll. 2213-2216.
3. Ibid., 2332-2333.

ends upon the Governor's decision to hold Calymath until the payment of a suitable ransom.

The foregoing account of Barabas's adventures should serve as earnest enough of the good judgment of those Marlowe critics who present the crown of accomplished Machiavellian roguery to the Jew of Malta, rather than to Mortimer or the Guise. Diabolic as were these two other applicants, their schemes seem almost merciful and certainly rather more circumscribed when set opposite the virtuosity of Barabas. Cruel and cunning they both were and inventive also to a point. It can also be said of them that their villainies are usually better motivated and so less ludicrous than those of Barabas, which, five times out of six, bear the unequivocal stamp of malice for the sake of malice. But for all that, each lacks Barabas's inspiration and resourcefulness. He has two or three devious ruses for insuring himself an unchallenged power for every one of theirs, as many variants of death by sword and poison for every one of theirs. Moreover, he is, as Machiavelli asserted in the prologue, the best representative that Marlowe had to offer of the whole mystery of Machiavellism as the poet derived it from Gentillet. Barabas possesses lust of power, baneful subtlety, egoism, conscienceless cruelty, misanthropy, revengefulness - every Italianate perversion of the times. He is Marlowe's acknowledged masterpiece of viciousness, the acknowledged type of certain sons

of Cain, who plagued the Tudor as well as the continental landscape. On the authority of the prologue alone we should accept him as the supreme embodiment of the Machiavellian scoundrel and Machiavellism itself as a quality recognized - but often deplored - of the Renaissance character.

CHAPTER VI
COURTLINESS

When Sir Thomas Hoby's sympathetic translation of Castiglione's Il Cortegiano appeared in 1561, it was reccommended to the Elizabethan reading public by these words of introduction:

> "The many-sided ideal has always been strong in England.... Our proudest title is.... that we too are men of the Renaissance, inheritors of that large and noble conception of humanity and art to which a monument is erected in this Book of the Courtier."[1]

If on the basis of the statement by Leslie Spence quoted at the beginning of the preceding chapter we were to guess the author of those lines, Spenser or Sidney would seem the most logical choice. But though both were fitted to admire the soundness of our unknown eulogist's judgment, neither was responsible for it. That judgment is the voluntary and sincere contribution of a man who, like Marlowe, the associate with whom he has been so often compared, had more than a little of the "Mischievous Machiavel" in his disposition. It was written by Sir Walter Ralegh.

A very little reflection must convince any one of us that such high-minded sentiments as these introducing Hoby's translation are not so incongruous in Ralegh as they might seem at the first hearing. Cruel, crafty, and

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1 "Christopher Hare," Op. Cit., p.204.

ambitious as he showed himself upon occasion, there is a splendid idealism in that salute to revelation which concluded his last hours of earth. Nor is it quite fair to dismiss as mere folklore or as the stubborn hypocrisy of a traitor the retort he made to his executioner. Asked to turn his head on the block so that his face would be toward the east, Ralegh is supposed to have answered haughtily: "What matter how the head lies, so the heart is right." At all events the self-sufficient fact that Ralegh could appreciate- at one and the same time- the superb Platonism of Castiglione and the grim opportunism of English Machiavellism furnishes another proof of the reality of the Renaissance paradox. Moreover it prefigures the occasional confusion of two fundamentally opposed ethical impulses, a confusion whose nature I shall attempt to evaluate a little later in the present chapter.

Ralegh was not the only man of his age to accept whole-heartedly the knightly manifesto which Baldassare Castiglione had shaped to a final form of concentrated charm and beauty from a code of conduct that had flourished through the Middle Ages. That recipe for perfect living was received for both its artistic and practicable content by discriminating readers in Italy and France. Moreover

"In the courtly atmosphere of the Elizabethan age the Cortegiano was an immediate success, and there are very few writers of the period who do not borrow from it a thought

or an illustration."[1]

Such was Shakespeare, who models upon it sections of Polonius's advice to Laertes. Such surely was Marlowe, who might well be recalling Castiglione's dream of gracious and inspired youthfulness in one of Edward II's most touching moments. Lightborn, come to murder Edward, finds him in the state of any prisoner- dirty, unshaven, humbled- and receives no harsher rebuke for his impertinence than this:

> "Tell Isabell the Queene, I lookt not thus,
> When for her sake I ran at tilt in Fraunce,
> And there vnhorste the duke of Cleremont."[2]

The influence of Castiglione on Marlowe is sometimes indirect or equivocal. But, before I proceed to analyze the specific evidences of that influence, it might be well to present a general statement of the requisites of the courtier as Castiglione conceived him.

First of all he should be of noble lineage. The difference between the "gentiluomo" and the "villano" is ever keenly felt by those agreeable disputants who come together in the court of Urbino to arrive at a definition of the perfect knight. There is, however, at least one democrat in the group in the person of Pallavicin, that mild misogynist, who concedes that a man of low degree may also attain to the arts of the perfect courtier by talent and industry. In addition the courtier must be proficient in all learning, arts, and

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1 "Christopher Hare," Op. Cit., pp. 200-201.
2 Edward II, ll. 2516-25618.

sciences and accomplished in all knightly pursuits. Both gifts and training should be such that he is equally brilliant, high-minded, and serviceable in camp or court, in warfare or love. It behooves him, in brief,

> "... not onely to set his delite to have in him selfe partes and excellent qualities, but also to order the tenor of his life after such a trade, that the whole may be answerable unto these parts, and see the selfe same to bee alwaies and in every thing such, that it disagree not from it selfe, but make one bodie of these good qualities..."[1]

Such an emphasis on well-rounded excellence recalls the central reason for Ralegh's enthusiastic reception of Hoby's translation.

What would be Marlowe's reaction to this formula? To the less flexible arbiters of the ideal courtier, who argue that perfection of mind and body are inborn, he would have a typical answer. Bakeless has recorded the successful efforts of Christopher Marlowe, shoemaker's son, to triumph over the caste discriminations of Elizabethan society and to seize the rank of gentleman-scholar and companion to the greatest wits and courtiers of the age. That ambition is chronicled in all his greatest characters. Tamburlaine has said:

"I am a Lord, for so my deeds shall prooue,

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1 Baldassare Castiglione, The Courtier, (N.Y.:1929?),p.94.

And yet a shepheard by my Parentage..."

Faustus was low-born and yet became a brilliant figure in the social world of his day. And Baldock, most accomplished of Marlovian courtiers, has laid proud claim to the only true nobility in words of crisp authority, to which Count Ludovico himself would have bowed.

"My name is Baldock, and my gentrie
I fetcht from Oxford, not from Heraldrie."

Only Mortimer and Guise of all Marlowe's male characters possess a truly obsessive pride in their high birth. Mortimer scorns Gaveston, the King's favorite, because he is base born and yet with a little favor "grows so pert."[1] And the Guise is patently favoring Castiglione's preference in courtiers when he exclaims:

"Yet Caesar shall goe forth.
Let mean consaits, and baser men feare death,
But they are pesants, I am Duke of Guise:
And princes with their lookes ingender feare."[2]

Such snobbishness represents no passing humor in the villain-hero of The Massacre at Paris. It finds emphatic expression on two other occasions.[3]

Marlowe seems also to have observed the letter if not the spirit of another of Castiglione's requisites for the courtier, who, in the opinion of the noble Ludovico,

1 Edward II, l.701.
2 The Massacre at Paris, ll.1005-1008.
3 Ibid, ll.419;1021.

must be skilled in letters. Particularly must he understand Latin and Greek, in which much of the most beautiful literature of the world has been written, and he must give special emphasis to the great poets, orators, and historians.[1] Baldock of Edward II, genius of hypocrisy in this as in his other pretensions, is all that the scholar-courtier should seem to be. With laconic resentment he wears the sober student's garb which Hamlet immortalized and which Castiglione elsewhere recommends as eminently suitable for private life. He is an Oxford man of sufficient learning and skill to draw the attention of Spenser, his companion in the stealthy arts, and to serve as tutor to a lady of quality. Moreover, he has the true humanist's flair for the clinching Latin phrase

"And hath a speciall gift to forme a verbe."[2]

In another section of the same play Marlowe handles the question of the courtier's attire at greater length. No one who has read Castiglione will forget the several pages of discussion he devotes to the problem of how the courtier should dress. His attention to the subject is often of a fascinating specificity. At one time he scores in propria persona those people who are so enamored of the modes of a past era that they criticize any and everything members of a later generation than their own attempt to wear. Such irrational critics will, for instance, be heard to assert

1 Baldassare Castiglione, Op. Cit., p. 71.
2 Edward II, l.775.

that a young man should not wear furs or "side garments" in winter or a cap until he is eighteen years of age.[1] A little later, but this time in the person of Federico Fregoso, he describes the costume a courtier should wear at a tournament. That, says Federico, is one of the occasions when the courtier may allow some latitude to a cultivated taste for magnificence. His armor, trappings, his crests and devices must be at once striking and appropriate.[2] Subsequently this same Federico, who is unquestionably the group's authority on knightly fashions, criticizes the French and German mode of dress: The citizens of the one nation wear theri clothes "over long" and those of the other incline to the "over short" (ed. note: "over-ample" and "over-scanty"). As for him, he applauds the Italian mean. He next procees to an exposition of what he would call the dernier cri in elegance of dress. On the whole he prefers a sober rather than a flamboyant style. In his opinion soberness of dress calls for something in scholar's black- like Baldock's garments- or dark at least. However, he absolutely allows the propriety of dashing colors over armor and the need of richness and splendor during festivals and formal affairs.

The historical sense is immediately pleased when he decides to become rather more specific. Ridiculing excess ornamentation or eccentricity in dress, he asks with well-

1 Baldassare Castiglione, Op. Cit., p. 90.
2 Ibid, p. 96.

bred scorn:

"Yet which of us is there, that seeing a gentleman goe with a garment upon his backe quartered with sundrie colors, or with so many pointes tied together, and all about with laces and fringes set overthwart, will not count him a verie dizarde, or a common jeaster?"

M. Pietro Bembo retorts that such a mode would be perfectly acceptable in Lombardy, and the gracious Duchess of Urbino hastens to fix his argument. Such an"outlandish" costume, she asserts, is then as suitable for the Lombardians as long wide sleeves for the Venetians and hoods for the men of Florence.[1]

In Edward II there is a notable passage that recalls to mind this dispute of Castiglione's courtiers. It is, however, impossible to say whether at the time he wrote Mortimer's criticism of Gaveston's mode of dress Kit Marlowe was turning Federico's advice over in his mind or merely recollecting the average garb of the Elizabethan courtier. Of the latter tradition Walsingham's circle and his noble friends of the School of Night must have given Marlowe many a sample. Ralegh for one affected garments "of an outlandish splendour after the extreme Elizabethan mode."[2] In all likelihood Marlowe was being influenced in part by his reading of Castiglione, in part by the strutting brilliance he saw all around him, Certainly there can be little question

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1 Baldassare Castiglione, Op.Cit., pp. 116-117.
2 John Bakeless, Op. Cit, p. 196.

that the Elizabethan's notions on apparel were derived both from the Ialian arbiter of all knightly excellence and the eye and lip lore of those travellers who had witnessed the had witnessed the varying moods in fashion that from one moment to the next dominated the Italian courts. But The Elizabethans, like the more blatant Italian courtiers, never could bear to do things by halves and would probably have preferred on the average the freakish splendor that Federico warned against to the more subdued elegance that seemed to him appropriate. Marlowe was wholeheartedly enough of the Elizabethan era to prefer this, the Elizabethan courtier's adaptation of Castiglione, to Castiglione himself- or at least to acknowledge its predominance. Marlowe's lines on clothes, like those of Castiglione, have, therefore, a special historical significance. Speaking of Gaveston to his uncle, Mortimer snaps:

> "And Midas like he iets it in the court,
> With base outlandish cullions at his heels,
> Whose proud fantastick liueries make such a show,
> As if that Proteus god of shapes appearde.
> I haue not seene a dapper iack so briske,
> He weares a short Italian hooded cloake,
> Larded with pearle, and in his Tuskan cap
> A iewell of more value than the crowne:
> Whiles other walke below, the king and he
> From out a window laugh at such as we,
> And floute our traine, and iest at our attire..."[1]

1 Edward II, ll. 705-715.

Another specific power that Castiglione exerted over his age is noticeable in the widespread devotion to his ideal of friendship- that beautiful, gentle, self-forgetful realtionship that he believed should obtain between the courtier and the courtier's true friends. What are the requisites of such a relationship as Castiglione saw them? Most important of all, the courtier and his best friend should have similar virtues. In the courtier's dealings with others he loves the things necessary are mutual forbearance, eternity of affection, courtesy, generosity, diligence to serve and honor, susceptibility to criticism, and- if ever the time comes for a choice between friend and ego- a reluctance in "seeking the highest and chiefe roomes of estimation..."[1] Shakespeare knew the golden gifts of such a relationship. It colored Polonius's advice to Laertes; it grappled together the souls of Hamlet and Horatio, of Antonio and Sebastian, of Brutus and Cassius. Marlowe was also sufficiently alive to contemporary currents of thought and feeling to sense its influence, but, perverse young man that he was, he must exploit it in all its Grecian intemperance in the persons of Edward and Gaveston and of Jove and Ganymede in Dido. The nature of the change a lovely tradition has undergone in its passage from Castiglione to Marlowe is revealed in the indulgent words with which

1 Baldassare Castiglione, Op. Cit., pp.120-121.

Mortimer, senior, palliates Edward's fatuous devotion to Gaveston.

"The mightiest kings haue had their minions
Great Alexander loude Ephestion,
And for Patroclus sterne Achillis droopt:
And not kings onelie, but the wisest men,
The Romaine Tullie loued Octauius,
Graue Socrates wilde Alcibiades:
Then let his grace, whose youth is flexible,
And promiseth as much as we can wish,
Freely enjoy that vaine light-headed earle,
For riper yeares will weane him from such toyes."[1]

However much, in the discussion of the ideal courtier, the questions of birth, scholarship, cress, and friendship are given prominence by Castiglione, all are subordinated to the solution of a central problem, that of the courtier's chiefest end. Toward the solution of this problem it is Signior Ottaviano of all those wise and charming people who carry the burden of Castiglione's argument who undertakes to lead the discussion. The chief end of the courtier, he asserts, is the service of his prince. The courtier must not merely be content to win over his lord by means of all the excellent qualities already enumerated; he must be the wise counsellor always, guiding the prince toward right decisions and dissuading him from evil ones. In such a concept of

1 Edward II, ll.688-698.

service flattery and selfish sub rosa dealings of any sort are, of course, outlawed as misleading a prince and tempting him to pride and self-indulgence.[1]

In the case of others of those qualities requisite to the courtier-high birth, humanism, taste in dress, excellence in friendship- Marlowe has been paying little more than lip service to the standards of Castiglione. But from the central ideal of courtly service he makes a conspicuous departure. He does more than that; he provides antithesis. Of all the barons and courtiers who surround the unwise and luckless Edward II only four have that germ of nobility that would have made them in Castiglione's view ideal servants to their prince, and those four figure somewhat inconsiderably in the play's action. Two show their excellence in the scene in which Edward enters his pitiful request to see the condemned Gaveston before his execution: They are Arundel and Pembroke. Arundel bears the message from the King and offers himself as surety that Gaveston will be returned. He is a man of whom even the biased Mortimer, junior, can say admiringly:

> "It is honourable in thee to offer this,
> But for we know thou art a noble gentleman,
> We will not wrong thee so,
> To make away a true man for a theefe."[2]

1 Baldassare Castiglione, Op. Cit., pp.261 ff.
2 Edward II, 11.1238-1241.

It is Pembroke, however, on whose word the other barons- the treacherous Warwick excepted- agree to give Gaveston a temporary reprieve. Of him Arundel exclaims enthusiastically:

"Your honor hath an adamant pf power
To drawe a prince."[1]

The other two high-minded nobles are Leicester and Berkeley. When Edward is finally defeated and imprisoned by his rebellious barons, most of them work hard- with their band of cheerful cut-throats- to make his confinement one of extreme discomfort and humiliation. But Leicester and Berkeley never lose their humanity or their courtly deference to Edward's inviolable kinship. On one occasion the distracted Edward indicates that he believes Berkeley has been sent to murder him, and the grieved courtier answers:

"My lord, thinke not a thought so villanous
Can harbor in a man of noble birth.
To do your highnes seruice and deuoire,
And saue you from your foes, Bartley would die."[2]

On another occasion, when the stony-hearted Bishop of Winchester is evaluating for the Queen and Mortimer the effectiveness of Berkeley and Leicester as keepers of the King, he says:

"The lord of Bartley is so pitifull,
As Leicester that had charge of him before."[3]

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1 Eward II, 11.1279-1280.
2 Ibid, 11. 2118-2121.
3 Ibid, 11. 2177-2178.

The courtiers that Edward gathers about him are so far from the Castiglione ideal in their notions of what constitutes service to a prince that they must be deemed either foolish flatterers or complete rogues- rogues in the violently opposite tradition of Machiavellism. The essential nature of their relationship with Edward has been anticipated by Gentillet. He asks why Princes are always well attended by flatteres and have so few genuine and good counselors in their entourage, and finds an answer in Philip de Comines, who claims that this state of things

> "...comes to passe, because Princes alwaies seeke such as feeds their owne humors and plese them best, and contemne such as are contrarie, although they may be more profitable unto them. For...such as have been nourished with a Prince, or which are of his age or which can best order and dispose his pleasures or such as apply themselves unto his will, are alwaies in good grace..."[1]

All Marlovian minions are born flatterers, for evidence of which we must go back even farther than Edward II and consult some of Tamburlaine's tributary kings. Look, for example, at the sadistic banquet scene in Tamburlaine, that precedes the sacking of Damascus. The conqueror has courses of crowns brought in and set before his assiduous generals,

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1 Innocent Gentillet, Op. Cit., p.33.

Theridamas, Techelles, and Usumcasane, which he asks them to try on. Their answers do much to explain why they continue to be favored by him, even when the rest of the world is his enemy.

> "Ther. I (my Lord) but none saue kinges must feede with these. Tech. Tis enough for vs to see them, and for Tamburlaine onely to enioy them."[1]

In Edward the cincture of flatterers has a softer man than Tamburlaine on whom to work. Edward shows all the symptoms of a Prince's "ruin," enumerated by Gentillet. His senses are "diminished"; he shuns wise men and favors new people, violent, foolish, lazy-flatterers.[2] For awhile his barons are sincere in their efforts to restore him to the sane and solid virtues of kingship. If, in the words of a messenger, he will discard Spenser, another and later favorite, if thenceforth he will

> "...cherish vertue and nobilitie,
> And haue old seruitors in high esteeme,
> And shake off smooth dissembling flatterers:
> ...they, their honors, and their liues,
> Are to your highnesse vowd and consecrate."[3]

But Edward is stubborn and petulant as well as weak. He has shown from the first that he lacks the wisdom and generosity to accept the sane counsel of a group of men who intend only his best interests and those of the realm.

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1 Tamburlaine, ll.1749-1752.
2 Innocent Gentillet, Op. Cit., p.266.
3 Edward II, ll.1476-1480.

"Beseemes it thee to contradict thy king?...
I will haue Gaveston, and you shall know,
What danger tis to stand against your king."[1]

Like the Prince whom Gentillet has in mind, he takes to his heart men, who, if they do not resort to the full-blown rascality of a Baldock or a Spenser, carry on, as Gaveston does, a sort of sneaking commerce with his worst humors. Gaveston, the King's first and closest favorite, is a somewhat silly and inconsequential young man with a real, if over-fond, feeling for his lord. His primary purpose in the play is to cultivate Edward's distorted appetites and to drive the barons to madness with his reckless effrontery and his extravagance. But, when occasion provokes, he is also the outright purveyor of hypocrisy and discord. In the scene in which the nobles seize Gaveston for banishment, Edward only rails like a feeble child, but his favorite appeals for harsher measures.

"No, threaten not my lord, but pay them home."[2]

Again, when Isabel, the loyal and touching Queen of the play's opening scenes, comes to warn her husband that the barons have taken arms against him Gaveston makes no attempt to use his influence to promote a better understanding between the two. In response to Edward's quick retort to the Queen,

"I, and tis likewise thought you fauour 'em,"

1 Edward II, ll.92; 96-97.
2 Ibid, l.321.

her attendants say reproachfully:

"Sweet vnckle speake more kindly to the queene."

But Gaveston whispers insinuatingly in his friend's ear:

"My lord, dissemble with her, speake her faire."

In his subsequent apology to the Queen it is notable that Edward follows Gaveston's advice with the docile accuracy of a sleep-walker.

"Pardon me sweet, I forgot my selfe."[1]

Spenser and Baldock are a far more pernicious pair. The former is probably a shade more shrewd and a shade less dourly sinister than his companion in ambitious tromperie. He knows well the Machiavellian character of those special talents that carry most weight at court.

"Then Balduck, you must cast the scholler off, etc."

But, as I have indicated in the preceding chapter, he is soon informed that he need give no suggestions on policy to that master of the double-faced arts, Baldock, the more-than-scholar.

"Spenser, thou knowest I hate such formall toies, etc."

The subsequent careers of these two justify this grim introduction. When Gaveston recommends Spenser to Edward as one deserving attention, the King receives his new courtier's offer of service with a promise of rank later on.

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1 Edward II, ll. 1027; 1029-1031.

Spenser puts into rapid and effective use the recipe for advancement he had given Balduck only a short while before and charms the King with the demure honey of his reply.

"No greater titles happen vnto me,
Then to be fauoured of your maiestie."[1]

It is the evil and insinuating counsel of these two, discerning all the King's weakness, superbly timed, that provokes Edward to open warfare with his barons. At first the King is kept in ignorance of the execution of Gaveston, though love and instinct tell him that he will never see his friend again. Spenser carries with him the perfect stimulant for such a mood.

"Were I king Edward Englands soueraigne,
Sonne to the louelie Elenor of Spaine,
Great Edward Longshankes issue: would I beare
These braues, this rage, and suffer vncontrowld
These Barons thus to beard me in my land,
In mine owne realme? my lord pardon my speeche,
Did you retaine your fathers magnanimitie,
Did you regard the honor of your name,
You would not suffer thus your maiestie
Be counterbuft of your nobilitie.
Strike off their heads, and let them preach on poles,
No doubt, such lessons they will teach the rest,

[1]Edward II, ll.1057-1058.

As by their preachments they will profit much,
And learne obedience to their lawfull king."

And when Edward, with whom this poison is beginning to work wonderfully, answers with some violence,

"Yea gentle Spencer, we haue beene too milde,
Too kinde to them, but now haue drawne our sword,"

Baldock steps in to clinch the King's purpose:

"This haught resolue becomes your maiestie,
Not to be tied to their affection,
As thou your hignes were a schoole boy still
And must be awde and gouernd like a child."[1]

Very shortly afterward the Earl of Arundel enters with news of Gaveston's murder at the hands of the barons. Edward at first receives the news with a specious calmness, when bolts of lightning would be more to Spenser's taste. By a number of skillful insertions of his own into the stream of question and answer that ensues between Edward and Arundel, Spenser all but imperceptibly pricks the King's decent grief to fury. When Edward suddenly exclaims:

"O shall I speake, or shall I sigh and die!"

then Spenser closes boldly with his opportunity.

"My lord, referre your vengeance to the sword,
Vpon these Barons, harten vp your men,
Let them not vnreuenged murther your friends,

1 Edward II 11.1316-1329; 11.1330-1331; 11.1334-1337.

Aduaunce your standard Edward in the field,

And marche to fire them from their starting holes."

This gifted piece of pandering directs Edward straight to the decision that Spenser has closest at heart. But, when a messenger from the barons enters shortly bearing the terms by which open conflict can be avoided and Spenser hears the sacrifice of himself demanded, he seems to experience a sharp interlinear pang of fear. Perhaps, he thinks, the success of his recent cajoling is doomed to be short-lived. Immediately, then, he hits with subtle aptness upon a favorite weakness of the King's and exlaims - probably with an oblique glance at Edward:

"A traitors, will they still display their pride?"

His triumph, skillfully inapparent, is at the moment completed, for Edward crieds to the messenger:

"Away, tarrie no answer, but be gon.
Rebels, will they appoint their soueraigne
His sports, his pleasures, and his companie:
...now get thee to thy lords,
And tell them I will come to chastise them,
For murthering Gaueston: hie thee, get thee gone,
Edward with fire and sword, followes at thy heeles."[1]

This tendency of Marlowe's to transform to something closely resembling Machiavellian policy the serene and

1 Edward II, l.1431; ll.1432-1436; l.1481; ll.1482-1484; ll.1486-1489.

thougtful arts of Castiglione's courtier curiously reflects the Elizabethan and Italian court life of the poet's period when most men were Raleghs and Francis Bacons keeping their eye forever cocked at the main chance and not being over-scrupulous in their methods of achieving it. It is also perfectly consistent with one side of Marlowe himself, to which the mischievous arts were always somehow more alluring than the tender virtues of a Sidney. We must, therefore, commend again the analysis of John Bakeless who ascribes the progress of Marlowe's Machiavellism both to his over-mastering ambition and the successful knavery he observed all about him. He would have been a bit of the rogue, the enfant terrible, in any age, under any stars. As egoist and playwright both, he would always have been fascinated by the man who was head and shoulders above his time and yet always its extravagant representative; who carried on a sort of grim and smiling colloquy with his own desires and was ruled by them to a point where he sometimes - or for always - forgot his common humanity with other men. There will always be something rather smoothly forbidding about the Christopher Marlowe of government intrigue, of the fight with William Bradley, of those table talks with orthodox Elizabethans apropos the authority of Scripture, of the headlong and fatal last encounter with Ingram Frizer at Deptford. That dark subtlety has been commemorated in the courtliness of Baldock and Spenser, no less than in the extra-courtly viciousness of Barabas of Malta.

CHAPTER VII

AESTHETICISM

Bakeless chooses Marlowe's abounding love of the beautiful as one of the more distinctive qualities that identify him with the Renaissance ideal of well-rounded manhood.[1] Here, of course, is no implication that a love of what is lovely was the soleprerogative of Marlowe's age. We have our Wallers and our Marvells, our Keatses and our Poes to indicate that such a conclusion is not at all the one that Bakeless had in mind. A more plausible one is this: the fundamental loyalties of the artist, like those of the age he represents, vary from age to age, but it was during the Renaissance and particularly under the benevolent aegis of Elizabeth that the beautiful in and of itself became a central object of the artist, no matter how many other brilliantly diversified attributes the offspring of his imagination might possess. In that single age there was the Hedonism of a Michelangelo, a Raphael, and a Leonardo for every Turner of a later era, a beauty-loving Spenser, Sidney, Shakespeare for every Coleridge of another era. Bakeless's statement has, however, implications that are in no way new. Arnold has called the Renaissance an age of expansion, one of those rare ages of the world over against which the vaunted classicism of the eighteenth century and the vaunted Romanticism of the nineteenth must be called periods of concentration and poor things in comparison. It is no wonder,

1. John Bakeless, Op. Cit., p. 3.

then, that the Renaissance should have produced more and greater men of more and greater loyalties than did most previous and subsequent periods. It is no wonder that your average man's worship of beauty should have been more ardent and more conspicuous then than it was during any other period.

If beauty held a concrete dominion over the minds of men in Elizabethan England, in Christopher Marlowe's mind it became the symbol of all that was most desirable in poetic achievement. Distinguished as he is for his pioneering work in the field of modern drama, Marlowe is first of all the poet. Our present imputation that his plays are so frequently undramatic cannot be explained away by the fact that he was experimenting in a comparatively new and flinty medium. Part of his trouble was that in the moments when he should have been absorbed in creating a primarily dramatic effect he was-how shall I put it?-"poetry-ridden." He could not rid himself of his lyrical obsession for all the ancient and modern laws of theatrical technique. In many cases the result is some of the worst theatre and some of the best poetry the stage has ever seen. Evidence for such an assertion may be found in the fact that nobody thinks of producing Marlowe any more; everybody just reads him.

The identification of poetry and beauty herein implied is not absolute, but in the case of Marlowe, as in the case of John Keats, just such an identification is inevitable, whether one is considering their theory or practice in poetry-

or both. Like Keats, Marlowe need only have sung; we do not require any statement of his philosophy of poetry. But, like Keats, he sang and wished to justify what he sang. For Keats's

"A thing of beauty is a joy forever"

we find in Marlowe a passage of rare philosophical import, setting forth, we may dare to presume, a crucial ideal of life and art. Those lines have been assigned to a much softened Tamburlaine and begin:

" What is beauty saith my sufferings then?"

But I am anticipating my climax. One more analogy must, however, be drawn between Marlowe and Keats befire I proceed to my main purpose- a systematic analysis of Marlowe's aestheticism as articulated by the main characters in his plays. C. F. Tucker Brooke has called the distinguishing feature of Marlowe's genius its youthfulness.[1] The significance of that statement is not merely chronological There is something perennially young about everything Marlowe wrote, something-in the best sense in which the word can be used- perennially adolescent. The same compliment may be paid to Keats. To be sure neither lived long enough to see custom gradually stale for him the first opalescent lustre of his morning world, in which Flora

"Shaking her siluer treshes in the aire,
Rain'st on the earth resolued pearle in showers."[2]

1. C. F. Tucker Brooke, ed., Op. Cit., p. 3.
2. Tamburlaine, ll. 1922-1923.

Their aspirations, intuitions, language - their whole world view - are as fresh, as full of lovely, unabashed vitality as those of Siegfried, the eternal type of young manhood. The senses are the adult faculties that are the first to awaken, and the poetry of both Marlowe and Keats is a paean to and of the senses. The only difference between the thrilling sensuousness of these two and that of the "world-wide undergraduate" is this: Both poets had a precocious gift of language, which helped them to discriminate among the rich disorder of their young impulses toward beauty and to hammer the best into universals on the conscious forge of a unique art.

The theme of this chapter - the quality of aestheticism as revealed through the male characters of Marlowe's plays - will be developed, as the theme has been developed in previous chapters, according to the internally climactic rather than the chronological method. Of all Marlowe's plays, then, The Jew of Malta and The Massacre at Paris must be said to represent a rather low point in aesthetic perception. This in itself is no condemnation, for the central purpose of these two plays is either dramatic or philosophical. It is, however, only fair to The Jew to say that, like most of those other Marlowe plays that are on the whole mediocre or inferior when judged on poetic merits alone, it contains at least one passage of rather felicitous poetry. I am thinking, of course, of

Barabas's fine opening soliliquy, in which the average Marlowe character's peculiar delight in gorgeous opulence of every sort seems to acquire a special strength and significance.[1] Dido ranks next to The Jew and The Massacre in poetic mediocrity. To its female characters - to Dido and Anna particularly - can be attributed all the important intuitions, dramatic and otherwise, and, though the blank verse spun out by Dido and Anna is neither very original, nor stiffly decorative in the lesser Marlowe tradition, it has an occasional frail loveliness that should be considered in the most charitable light - as an indication of a talent that can gather strength with the advent of more stimulating themes.

There is, however, one passage in Dido that is both genuine Marlowe of a slightly inferior sort and an exemplary piece of Renaissance sensuousness - the latter because Marlowe happily shared Shakespeare's practice of adding to historical psychology an Elizabethan finish. The speech in which Jove promises to regiment heaven for the amusement of his little favorite, Ganymede, is chiefly important as a diluted sample of that gorgeous profligacy of motive and imagery that distinguishes most Marlowe characters and, of course, the poet himself. Says Jove to Ganymede:

1. The Jew of Malta, ll. 36-82.

"From Iunos bird Ile pluck her spotted pride,
To make thee fannes wherewith to coole thy face,
And Venus Swannes shall shed their siluer downe,
To sweeten out the slumbers of thy bed;"[1]

In Edward II a similar pretty extravagance of mood is detectable in Gaveston's plans to entertain his friend and sovereign. But in this instance the standard has moved a little away from the wholly material sensuousness of the preceding passage, which is Marlowe and Marlowe characterization at its worst, but we are still far removed from the poised aestheticism which possesses both vigor and vitality and which is Marlowe at his best.

"Musicke and poetrie is his delight,
Therefore Ile haue Italian maskes by night,
Sweet speeches, comedies, and pleasing showes,
And in the day when he shall walke abroad,
Like Syluan Nimphes my pages shall be clad,
My men like Satyres grazing on the lawnes,
Shall with their Goate feete daunce an antick hay.
Sometime a louelie boye in Dians shape,
With haire that gilds the water as it glides,
Crownets of pearle about his naked armes,
And in his sportfull hands an Oliue tree,
To hide those parts which men delight to see,
Shall bathe him in a spring, and there hard by,

1. Dido, ll. 34-37.

> One like Actaeon peeping through the groue,
> Shall by the angrie goddesse be transformde,
> And running in the likenes of a Hart,
> By yelping hounds puld downe, and seeme to die,
> Such things at (sic) these best plese his maiestie,
> My lord."[1]

The lines are Gaveston's own defence of his right to a share in the society of humanists, to which, as I have indicated in Chapter II, many a Marlowe character belongs. But, more pertinently to the present discussion, they are a speaking example of the poetic faculty in the Renaissance man when it lacks moral ballast. Here is four-alarm imagery and yet only fitful flame at the indicated point of fire. In a man of Lyly's limited powers to transport, the desire to surfeit with and be surfeited by mere sense data is conceivable. In Gaveston it is a more or less appropriate clue to an habitual profligacy. But in Marlowe it represents the unreasoned extreme of a sound ideal in poetic expression.

A very considerable leap in quality brings us to Doctor Faustus - the sole play in which Marlowe has succeeded in achieving a brave union of his otherwise conflicting dramatic and poetic impulses. There is no purer poetry to be found in all Marlowe than in that anguished final soliliquy, where the learned one of Wittenberg sets the cornerstone of a tradition that will be fully realized later in the characters of Browning's dramatic monologues. It is, however, not

1. Edward II, ll. 54-72.

in such rare passages of perfect, burning articulateness as this that we must seek the type of Faustus's - and Marlowe's - aestheticism. Rather we must look for it in the doctor's impassioned cry which John Bakeless finds rebelliously reminiscent of Marlowe's own rather drab and thrifty Cambridge days,[1]

"Ile haue them fill the publicke schooles with silk,"[2]

or in the glorious apostrophe to Helen's shade, which stands in the first magnitude among all the finest lyrical passages in Marlowe,

"Was this the face that lancht a thousand shippes?
And burnt the toplesse Towres of Ilium?
Sweete Helen, make me immortall with akisse:
Her lips sucks forth my soule, see where it flies:
Come Helen, come giue mee my soule againe.
Here will will I dwel, for heauen be in these lips,
And all is drosse that is not Helena:
I wil be Paris, and for loue of thee,
Insteede of Troy shal Wertenberge be sackt,
And I wil combate with weake Menelaus,
And weare thy colours on my plumed crest:
Yea I wil would Archillis in the heele,
And then returne to Helen for a kisse.
O thou art fairer then the euening aire,
Clad in the beauty of a thousand starres,

1. John Bakeless, Op. Cit., p. 54.
2. Doctor Faustus, l. 118.

Brighter are thou then flaming Iupiter,
When he appeared to haplesse Semele,
More louely than the monarke of the skie
In wanton Arethusaes azurde armes,
And none but thou shalt be my paramour."[1]

It would be difficult - and dangerous too - to attempt a flat identification of any character in his plays with Marlowe himself. But there are analogies with his own career that seem to justify one's saying that he wrote himself somewhat, not into one, but into two characters - Faustus and Tamburlaine. A composite of two of Tamburlaine's qualities - o'erleaping ambition and that anomalous tenderness of the love poetry to Zenocrate - and two of Faustus's - boundless intellectual curiosity and that sheer Elizabethan enthusiasm of the senses, revealed once only in the wooing of Helen - somehow produce a most convincing notion of what Marlowe the man was like, a notion limited, it is true, to several essentials only, but convincing nevertheless.

The dual identity of Faustus is nowhere more brilliantly evident than in that same lyric to Helen, which I have just quoted. The mantle of an impressive, yet curiously effortless, scholarship is doffed with that Elizabethan flourish that Marlowe himself knew best how to command, and in its place we have the Sybaritic elation of a

1. Doctor Faustus, ll. 1328-1347.

man perennially young and ardent - the lover of Keats's urn. His imagination exalts to a deliciously serene immortality the purely mortal loveliness which his keen eye observes. In less than two dozen lines the soul of an ancient legend is revived by an aging scholar who has not yet lost his physical appetites and blazoned on the shield of highest art in a peerless organization of gold and flame and azure. For, indeed, the curiously flat, enameled field of limitless color, that Marlowe and Keats both produce upon occasion, reminds one more of the special effects of heraldry than of third-dimensional art. This unique turn of sight and fancy is best illustrated in the fixed vividness of the closing lines of the paean to Helen,

"O thou art fairer then the euening aire, etc."

A similar taste for frozen rainbow essences often marks the poetic moments of the men characters in Tamburlaine. There is little, for instance, that is individual in their individual dreams of what constitutes victorious knightly splendor. All talk in the proud, stiff imagery - gorgeous only for its own sake - which Marlowe adopts either in his less inspired moments or when he wishes to surfeit himself on a heaped-up banquet of handsome sense impressions, as he did when he had Faustus exclaim:

"Ile haue them fill the publicke schooles with silk"

In such a spirit is Ceneus's account of how the ransom of

African captains has made distinguished Persians

"...martch in coates of gold,
With costile iewels hanging at their eares,
And shining stones vpon their loftie Crestes."[1]

and a soldier's description of the Persian army sent to meet Tamburlaine:

"Their plumed helmes are wrought with beaten golde.
Their swords enameld, and about their neckes
Hangs massie chaines of golde down to the waste,
In euery part exceeding braue and rich."[2]

This opulent accumulation of the hard radiances of paints, enamels, gems, and metals can, and frequently does, become tiresome, except in those rather rare cases in which it is dignified by a fitting interplay with character. Such an instance can be found in one of Tamburlaine's expensive boasts. It begins:

"Thorow the streets with troops of conquered kings,
Ile ride in golden armour like the Sun
And in my helme a triple plume shal spring,
Spangled with Diamonds dancing in the aire
To note me Emperour of the three fold world,
Like to an almond tree ymounted high,
Vpon the lofty and celestiall mount,
Of euer greene Selinus....."

Then a softening of mood becomes evident and, by a sort of

1. Tamburlaine, ll. 151-153.
2. Ibid, ll. 320-323.

retroactive glow, warms the splendid selfishness of the preceding lines into something resembling humanity.

"...queintly dect
With bloomes more white than Hericinas browes,
Whose tender blossoms tremble euery one,
At euery little breath that thorow heauen is
blowen:...."

Here is still poetry that must be read with the five senses of mind alone, but it offers a short release from the dominant mood created in the opening lines, and the final return to Tamburlaine's usual tone of irritating Jovianism is both dramatically and poetically just.

"Then in my coach like Saturnes royal son,
Mounting his shining chariot, gilt with fire,
And drawen with princely Eagles through the path,
Pau'd with bright cristall and enchac'd with starres,
When all the Gods stand gazing at his pomp.
So will I ride through Samarcanda streets,
Vntil my soule disseuered from this flesh,
Shall mount the milk-white way and meet him there.
To Babylon my Lords, to Babylon."[1]

Perhaps the most effective sample of Marlowe's use of the mesmerism of color is put, appropriately enough, into the somewhat neutral mouth of a messenger. Through a series

1. Tamburlaine, ll. 4093-4112.

of stunning pictorial climaxes, the poet achieves in this passage a little masterpiece of purely sensuous poetry. Says the messenger to Egypt's Sultan:

"Pleaseth your mightinesse to vnderstand,
His resolution far exceedeth all:
The first day when he pitcheth downe his tentes,
White is their hew, and on his siluer crest
A snowy Feather spangled white he beares,
To signify the mildnesse of his minde,
That satiate with spoile refuseth blood:
But when Aurora mounts the second time,
As red as scarlet is his furniture,
Then must his kindled wrath bee quencht with blood,
Not sparing any that can manage armes:
But if these threats mooue not submission,
Black are his collours, blacke Pauilion,
His speare, his shield, his horse, his armour, plumes,
And Ietty Feathers menace death and hell."[1]

It is however, through the medium of the love poetry in Tamburlaine that Marlowe, at one and the same time, succeeds in humanizing the steely and over-sententious character of the conqueror and achieves some of his mightiest and most beautiful lines. In his apostrophes to Zenocrate Tamburlaine reveals a tenderness nobly articulate and

1. Tamburlaine, ll. 1419-1433.

a faculty for aesthetic perception that is both delicate and intense. The fact that the martial undertones of his character are nowhere lost, even in the moments when he is most melted by Zeoncrate's beauty, makes this rare softness even more believable.

In the beginning that new softness which his instant appreciation of Zenocrate brings is given an appealing human quality by the fact of his utter inexperience in love-making. He is like a spendthrift youth, who can think of no more effective way to please his love than by plying her with gifts fantastic in their number and luxuriance.

"A hundreth Tartars shall attend on thee,
Mounted on Steeds, swifter than Pegasus.
Thy Garments shall be made of Medean silke,
Enchast with precious iuelles of mine owne:
More rich and valurous than Zenocrates."

With the final line of this piece of declamation, however, he begins to warm to his theme until finally he has produced a series of images almost miraculous in their infinite connotation of "white".

"With milke-white hartes vpon an iuorie sled,
Thou shalt be drawen amidst the frosen pooles,
And scale the isie mountaines lofty tops:
Which with thy beautie will be soone resolu'd."[1]

One is instantly reminded of the lines from Venus and Adonis,

1. Tamburlaine, ll. 289-297.

which Coleridge uses so profitably in his discussion of imagination and fancy.

"Full gently now she takes him by the hand,
A lily prison'd in a jail of snow,
Or ivory in an alabaster band;
"So white a friend engirts so white a foe."[1]

Only two masters of the poetic image could have achieved the delicate sense distinctions revealed in these two passages.

The unforgettable transformation of character that the appearance of Helen effects for Doctor Faustus has its counterpart in Tamburlaine in the famous passage of Part I which begins,

"Ah faire Zenocrate, diuine Zenocrate,
Faire is too foule an epithete for thee",

and ends with the superb meditation on beauty, which, more than anything else he ever wrote, seems to be the synthesis of Marlowe's own aesthetic creed as well as of Tamburlaine's.

The "Scourge of God" begins by justifying a half-acknowledged desire to be merciful to Zenocrate's father, the doomed Sultan of Egypt, with a number of sensitive, high-keyed exaggerations about her state of mind, in which the familiar rich decorativeness of imagery has been charged by lofty feeling and transformed to clearest poetry. To himself he represents her as utterly moving and lovely when

1. Venus and Adonis, ll. 361-364.

she weeps

"And like to Flora in her mornings pride,
Shaking her siluer treshes in the aire,
Rain'st on the earth resolued pearle in showers.."

The subsequent development of an implicit ideal into an explicit and impassioned philosophy is first suggested in a rather cold personification. It is on Zenocrate's face that

"...Beauty, mother to the Muses sits,
And comments vollumes with her Yuory pen:
Taking instructions from thy flowing eies..."

The preamble to the discussion of beauty proper, represented by the foregoing lines, now concludes with a stunning and typically Elizabethan conceit.

"Eies when that Ebena steps to heauen,
In silence of thy solemn euenings walk,
Making the mantle of the richest night
The Moone, the Planets, and the Meteors light,
There Angels in their christal armours fight
A doubtfull battell with my tempted thoughtes,
For egypts freedom and the Souldans life."

Thereupon follows the analysis of beauty - obsession of most literary men of the Renaissance and of Marlowe before every other - in which one can mark the progress of the strangest and most effective of all artistic unions, that of driving logic and the ripest of poetic intuitions.

Lines 1941 to 1954 need not bow to the best of their kind in Shakespeare; they are, in fact, faintly reminiscent of a mood and manner of his, especially in the sonnets.

"What is beauty saith my sufferings then?
If all the pens that euer poets held
Had fed the feeling of their maisters thoughts,
And euery sweetnes that inspir'd their harts,
Their minds, and muses on admyred theames:
If all the heauenly Quintessence they still
From their immortall flowers of Poesy,
Wherein as in a myrrour we perceiue
The highest reaches of a humaine wit.
If these had made one Poems period
And all combin'd in Beauties worthinesse,
Yet should ther houer in their restlesse heads,
One thought, one grace, one woonder at the least,
Which into words no vertue can digest."

In the temporizing passage that follows the climax of his rigorous investigation of beauty as it bears upon his motives, Tamburlaine reproaches himself for effeminacy in entertaining such thoughts as those that have just been passing through his mind.

The soliloquy ends on a masterly psychological detour, which serves the complex function of establishing a poetic denouement, of clapping Tamburlaine back into his

more familiar character, and of completing a personal philosophy in a manner that is consistent for Tamburlaine at least. In one glittering stroke, the conqueror of the threefold world has rationalized Zenocrate's influence into its proper position in his ambitious scheme; subdued every aesthetic impulse to a rationale of ethics; and interpreted his impending decision - the pardon of Zenocrate's father - in the light of that ethical point of view.

"I thus conceiuing and subduing both
That which hath stoopt the tempest of the Gods,
Euen from the fiery spangled vaile of heauen,
To feele the louely warmth of shepheards flames,
And martch in cottages of strowed weeds,
Shal giue the world to note for all my byrth,
That Vertue solely is the sum of glorie,
And fashions men with true nobility."[1]

Tamburlaine is no different from most Marlowe characters in that he is forever talking not in his own historical person but as a man of the poet's own era, and it is a typically Renaissance conflict that he has articulated here. Perhaps every man of that age would not have imitated Tamburlaine in subduing the aesthetic elements in his nature to an ideal of conduct. Such sacrifice of self may have seemed hardly called for - or only ideally called

1. Tamburlaine, ll. 1916-1917; 1921-1923; 1925-1934; 1941-1954; 1964-1971.

for, as Edmund Spenser conceived it to be. That question is, however, not important. What is important is that Tamburlaine possessed a love of beauty in such proportion that it could be in acknowledged conflict with his manhood and his devotion to an ethical ideal - an ideal that even now begins to smack strongly of the stoicism that absorbed the School of Night. Spenser and Marlowe were more typical of the average Renaissance man than Tamburlaine in that they were more myriad-minded. Neither was, like Tamburlaine, the conqueror extraordinary, governed by a single fixed idea. If either felt the pull between a dream of ideal loveliness and a stricter course of action, he was supple enough to be able to juggle the two and, in fact, to establish some sort of sympathy between them. That gift for light-hearted reconciliation of diverse loyalties is, it must once again be affirmed, a key quality in the Renaissance character.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

It has been my concern in the foregoing chapters to isolate and analyze in some detail a group of seven qualities that seemed to me the peculiar property of a man of the Renaissance. The evidence in all cases has been derived from incidents in Christopher Marlowe's life and from the activities of the male character of his plays, and has been fortified by certain critical sources. For the sake of perfect justice and clarity my method in this undertaking has been expansive and its effect, I believe, cumulative. The task that now rests with me is one of abstraction and synthesis. I wish to organize in the few pages that remain a solid portrait of the man of the Renaissance. Though it may not represent all that Barabas wished his wealth to be,

"Infinite riches in a little roome,"[1]

it will, I think, be verisimilar.

Our Renaissance man is, first of all, the scholar. He may possess the slightly abnormal acuteness of a University Wit. If he does he will probably comb the libraries of Cambridge University, stocking his poised and brilliant mind with references that will one day appear in his great plays but particularly in Tamburlaine. Later he will be discovered

1 The Jew of Malta, l.72.

among that gifted group of intellectuals comprising the notorious School of Night. Or he may have the almost inhuman relish for information that distinguished Faustus of Wittenberg. It does not matter much whether his scholarship is of great or greatest intensity. The important thing is that classical names and references and learned allusions to astronomical studies spring to his lips as naturally and felicitously as a sword to his hand. We might even, perhaps, be fairer to our Renaissance man and truer to history by claiming for him, not so much the unusual virtuosity of a Marlowe or a Faustus, as that casual rightness of learned reference one finds in every street of Elizabethan life- the rightness of a Baldock, a Mortimer, or even an Ithamore.

But the bookishness of this man of the Renaissance does not cut him off from a life of remarkable physical activity- normal vigor in that Titanic age's view of things. He can suddenly make up his mind to go on a secret and dangerous government mission, whose intriguing timeliness is almost soured by subsequent misunderstandings and complications in his personal life. Spontaneous swordsmanship and dagger-play, brilliantly effective, is natural to him. He may have been moved to it by his innate love of adventure, or by the hot temper he shared with most of his contemporaries, or by the provoking conduct of a Bradley or a couple of Holywell

Street constables. But depend upon it, his enthusiasm for quarreling in any cause will lead him as quickly into a fatal engagement, in which his own career comes to a swift and even mysterious end, as into a match that has all the appearances of a "fill-in." At all events he must keep ceaselessly on the move, living on many levels of experience but on two generally- the physical and the intellectual. It might almost be said of him that he strides about his varied business with a book in one hand a sword in the other, often juggling both with a curious ease and effectiveness. For he is the born man of parts, whose life seems highly organized almost without conscious effort.

He is the man with a thirst for power- natural and supernatural power- possessing now the average Elizabethan appetites of Tamburlaine's gneral, Theridamas, or a member of the School of Night, now the limitless ambition of a Tamburlaine or a Faustus. Of course it all depends on whether or not he carries about with him a little of Kit Marlowe's early frustration and his precocious gift for imagining. The desire for power will generally be found to have one of two objects. It may not rest until it has achieved the impossible in worldly power as in the case of Tamburlaine. Or it may not rest until it has triumphed over the medieval, the traditional boundaries of man's mind and spirit. It may seek to yoke the threefold world, to

wear a crown, to sift all the riches of earth into a private pocket, not simply because these things seem priceless in themselves, but because their possession signifies the eternal restless invincibility of man's ego. Or it may seek to go knocking irreverently at the gates of God's remotest mysteries and to snatch away the purple from the traditionally unrevealed. But it is always splendid, proud, and resolute, possessing infinite-seeming vitality and resourcefulness.

There is a good deal of the rogue about our Renaissance man. His roguery is partly a commodity of the times, partly the result of a sensational discovery by the dramatist, Christopher Marlowe, who put a glowing premium upon the so-called "Machiavellian" arts. In his role as Machiavel the Renaissance man is cunning, cruel, a little more egoistical than usual, vengeful- all in the interest of power. He cannot even accept the courtier's arts of Castiglione, with which he became acquainted through his far-flung reading, without now and then revising them to something more nearly resembling Machiavellism. In camp, in court, in private life, a dark stream of knavery stains many of his activities.

But he possesses one other quality that redeems all his pride and his villainies. It is a love of beauty that brings a rich glow of poetic insight to his meanest

and his most casual mometns. He is a man of the sense, who transforms all his chance impressions, no less than his life's crises, into memorable lyrics. Given opportunities great and small- a project conquest, the inspiration of a beautiful woman, or the sight of a pagan host marching in preposterous spendor- and his mood will adjust to mellifluous periods of song. A pageant of ivory, gold, and stained-glass colors will immediately replace the undivided pursuit of scholarship or some scene of tense and deadly violence. The Renaissance man talks naturally in the richest poetry.

Such is the amn I would offer as a sound representative of Europe's greatest cultural revival. Fighting, speaking constant poetry, plotting, studying, dying violently, he manages to strike a shrewd balance among all the diverse qualities of which he consists and distill from them all the single quality that seems peculiar to the man of that hour- versatiltiy.

N.B. I have not appended a separate abstract to this paper because it seemed to me that such an appendix would merely repeat my conclusion in content, method, and length.

C.B.

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